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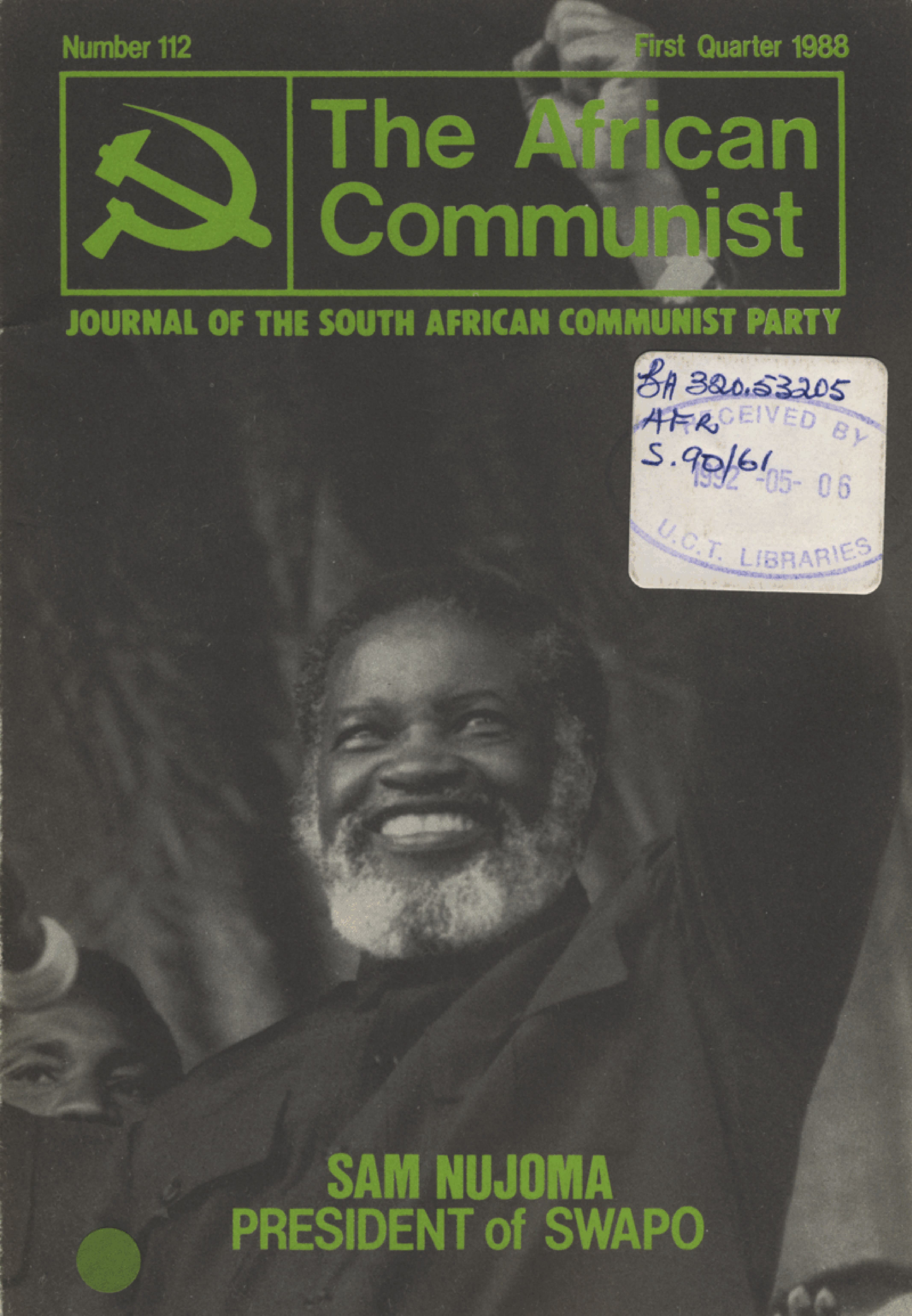

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WELCOME HOME GOVAN MBEKI

Released in Port Elizabeth on November 5, 1987, after 24 years in prison, he declared his continued allegiance to the principles of the ANC and SACP

EDITORIAL NOTES

40 YEARS OF NATIONALIST RULE

The year 1988 is going to be a year in which the white supremacists dedicate themselves to the defence of the apartheid empire. For them it is a year of anniversaries:

1658 — 330 years since the arrival of the first slaves at the Cape Town refreshment station.

1688 — 300 years since the arrival of the French Huguenots.

1838 — 150 years since the great Trek and the Battle of Blood River.

1938 — 50 years since the Voortrekker celebrations and the birth of the Ossewa Brandwag.

1948 — 40 years since the advent to power of the Nationalist Government under Dr Malan.

White supremacy and its concomitants — racism, discrimination, segregation, oppression and exploitation — have been essential ingredients of the South African way of life ever since Van Riebeeck landed in 1652. For racists the length of time during which white supremacy has prevailed in South Africa is accepted as a sign that it is divinely ordained and, based on the innate superiority of white over black, must continue indefinitely into the future. For the majority of the population, however, this year's crop of racist anniversaries will be treated as a call to battle. The day of the apartheid dodo is over; it is up to us to make it extinct.

When the Nationalist Government came to power in 1948 it had its apartheid plan for the future. The plan was to buttress the position of the white minority with a battery of laws that would guarantee the permanent separation of the races and perpetuate black inferiority. The first three sessions of the Nationalist-dominated Parliament saw the following laws enacted:

1948 session — the Asiatic Laws Amendment Act withdrawing Indian representation in Parliament; the Electoral Laws Amendment Act making more stringent the conditions for registering Coloured voters.

1949 session — the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, the Asiatic Land Tenure Amendment Act preventing Indian "penetration" of white areas, the South West African Affairs Amendment Act providing for representation of Namibia's white citizens in the House of Assembly.

1950 session — Population Registration Act, Group Areas Act, Immorality Amendment Act, Suppression of Communism Act.

These have been the key laws of the entire period of Nationalist rule. They were designed to seal off the population in watertight compartments, to prevent any leakages from one compartment to another, to restrict black access to land and black economic competition with whites, to preserve all power in white hands. An education policy was designed in a bid to brainwash black children and secure black submission and compliance with the white diktat. The impetus of the first years was sustained with unparalleled ferocity in the face of mounting opposition and within ten years parliament had been converted into an all-white body with the exclusion of all forms of black representation and the establishment of the first bantustans; not only the Communist Party but also the African National Congress had been banned; and the Sharpeville shooting had taken place and the first state of emergency been declared with over 20,000 people detained without trial.

The apartheid vision which brought the Nationalists to power in 1948 has been dissipated in the ensuing years. Today the Nationalist regime has abandoned even the use of the word apartheid, which arouses so much hostility both at home and abroad, and seeks to substitute euphemisms like "separate freedoms" to disguise the fact that today freedom does not exist for anybody in South Africa, either white or black. There is no freedom of press or assembly, no civil liberty, no habeas corpus, no academic independence for anybody, and while a state of emergency may be ended by proclamation some day, the real emergency based on detention without trial and reflecting the failure of the system will continue until apartheid is totally overthrown.

The Vision Fades

The Nationalist regime even admits that its vision has faded. Of those laws enacted in its first years, the Immorality and Mixed Marriages Acts have been repealed. The drive towards an all-white Parliament has been diverted and the tricameral parliament has been established in a bid to make out that all races (except the African majority) are included equally in the legislative process. These are all part of P.W. Botha's "reform" programme designed to deflect criticism, defuse opposition and secure collaboration from the oppressed majority. That they are ineffectual is beside the point. The very use of the word "reform" indicates that the regime concedes that its apartheid system is blemished and needs to be improved. Behind the facade it is obvious that the apostles of apartheid are beginning to lose their confidence and their nerve.

The tough tactics pursued by the regime are a sign of weakness, not of strength. The resort to death squads, kidnappings and assassinations, shootings and baton charges at home and aggression abroad, detention without trial, execution and systematic torture of political prisoners — all this is a confession of failure. As a political and economic system apartheid simply does not work. The regime cannot provide a decent living for all its citizens, it cannot pay its debts, it has forfeited the respect of the international community. Above all the regime's resort to ever-increasing force and terror has failed to cow the people and eliminate opposition at home and abroad. Neither reform nor repression has succeeded in producing stability.

Nothing reflects the weakness of the regime so much as its indecision over the proposed release of Nelson Mandela and the other Rivonia-trial prisoners. Their continued incarceration is an outrage condemned by the whole world. The regime itself desperately wants to be rid of a burden which does its image so much harm both at home and abroad. Yet it continues to fumble and hesitate, making and withdrawing conditions, because of its fear that it will not be able to handle the consequences either of holding or releasing the prisoners, now in their 25th year (26 in the case of Mandela himself). The release of Govan Mbeki last November may have been a trial run but undoubtedly represented a triumph for the democratic cause. Progressives the world over must now step up the pressure to ensure that the remaining prisoners are released forthwith.

The present regime longs for a scab to form but is unwilling to treat the underlying infection, so the wounds of the social war it is waging continue to suppurate. Atrocity is piled on atrocity. The conscripts of apartheid, white and black, protected by the emergency moratorium, become conditioned to inflicting pain and death on the opponents of apartheid, including women and children. The youth of the townships are disembowelled or burnt to death by masked vigilantes. Students on university campuses are tear-gassed and sjambokked mercilessly. Death squads large and small, including full time military units, are trained and sent into neighbouring countries to sow devastation.

Favourable Signs

This year the Nationalist regime will be celebrating past conquests and calling the faithful to pray at the shrines of white supremacy. For all members of the liberation movement 1988 must be a year of rededication to the freedom struggle, not only because there is simply no alternative, but also because — emergency or no emergency — the signs of final victory have never been more plentiful or encouraging. We have made striking advances in the 40 years of Nationalist rule. We have tried and tested organisations and leadership whose mettle has been proved in almost continuous battle and which has won the allegiance of the majority of the population. We have, in the form of the Freedom Charter, a policy which is almost universally accepted as the blueprint of the alternative South Africa. Above all we face an enemy which, for all its outward appearance of strength, has lost its vision and its nerve as well as all meaningful initiative, and blunders on from day to day hoping mindlessly that "alles sal reg kom".

There has been a lot of talk recently about the possibility of negotiations with the apartheid regime, but although there are many powerful forces trying to push the ANC to the round table, so far there is nothing on offer to negotiate about. Moreover, there is no possibility of the regime making any meaningful offer under present conditions. In its statement on October 9, 1987, the Nationalist Executive of the African National Congress reaffirmed:

"The ANC and the masses of our people as a whole are ready and willing to enter into genuine negotiations provided they are aimed at the transformation of our country into a united and non-racial democracy. This, and only this, should be the objective of any negotiating process. Accordingly no meaningful negotiations can take place until all those concerned, and specifically the Pretoria regime, accept this perspective which we share with the whole of humanity".

The Pretoria regime, which has been placed in power by the votes of only 5 per cent of our population, does not accept this perspective and can never accept it so long as it responds only to the demands of its constituents. At the moment, its hands stained with the blood of our people, it is prepared to negotiate only the surrender of the ANC and is unwilling to make any sort of compromise. As P.W. Botha made plain in a speech in October 1985: "No Nationalist Party government can accept the principle of majority rule in one state. We reject that". Since the ANC is prepared to accept nothing less, where is the room for negotiations or agreement?

Negotiations only become feasible when the liberation movement headed by the ANC has succeeded in destroying the basis of white supremacy rule in South Africa once and for all, when the ANC can negotiate from a position of strength and not wishful thinking. And when that time comes, it will not be with the likes of P.W. Botha that the ANC will be negotiating, but with representatives of all sections of the South African population who *are* prepared to accept the principle of majority rule in one state.

Thanks to the struggle waged by the ANC and its allies on all fronts over the years, the percentage of South Africans, including whites, who are prepared to accept majority rule in one state is higher than it has ever been. But there is still some way to go. In the meantime illusions about an imminent end of conflict through negotiations must be abandoned. Those who are trying to seduce the ANC with the prospect of negotiations have only one objective in view — the conversion of the ANC from a liberation to a collaboration organisation, abandoning its revolutionary perspective and divided from its revolutionary allies.

For the liberation movement the only road forward lies through an intensification of the struggle on all fronts — the underground, the mass democratic movement, the armed struggle and the international solidarity movement. The people's resolution can only be weakened by talk of negotiations at this stage. The pitch and tempo of the fight for freedom must be stepped up until the resistance of the enemy is overcome and final victory assured.

CULTURAL BOYCOTT IS A WEAPON AND A SHIELD

The cultural and academic boycott is, as it was in the early fifties when Chief Albert Luthuli called the international community to isolate the apartheid regime — a tactic. It is a flexible method of fighting and isolating the apartheid regime, so that other methods can be used finally to destroy the apartheid structures and for the oppressed and exploited to seize political power and build a new state, guided by the Freedom Charter. So, in 1988, the issue which all those who fight against apartheid must be concerned with and eager to implement is how to isolate apartheid culture; also at the same time how to promote the people's democratic culture.

The cultural and academic boycott is a tactic precisely because in applying it, we are guided by and we guide a constant of life — change. In the recent period the struggle has been enhanced by the complete isolation of apartheid culture. Now we must further enhance the struggle by continuing the isolation of apartheid culture, at the same time skilfully presenting to the world the theatre, music, films, books, photographs, paintings etc. which the structures and organisations of the fighting people of South Africa are creating, expressing their disgust for oppression and exploitation, as well as stating their willingness to fight for and win freedom.

When, about three years ago, the ANC called upon our people to destroy apartheid structures and render the country ungovernable, it was a call upon our people to create organs of popular power to fight further for the implementation of the Freedom Charter. In this fierce fight which in recent months has claimed so many lives, political leaders, military leaders, educational, cultural and social leaders emerge from among the one-time cheap labourers. They emerge shaped by struggle, ready to be tempered by science and the reality of the world so as to further deepen the crisis of the apartheid regime, and entrench the objective for a non-racial, united and democratic South Africa.

The issue of the cultural boycott is not an academic one. It takes place within the context of a political struggle waged by people through tried and developing structures and organisations which are a point of reference for all issues related to the struggle which is both political and military. These fighting structures and organisations like the UDF, Cosatu, Sayco etc, which wage, through unity in action, a legal struggle against the apartheid regime, daily bring hundreds of activists to the reality of our struggle. We also have a history of illegal struggle led by the ANC and fought from an underground position and through armed actions. It is those who are conducting these actions who must be consulted on all matters relating to the pace and direction of the South African struggle. The cultural and academic boycott issue is no exception. The criteria for the choice of an individual or group which must through cultural manifestation represent and portray the struggle cannot be forged through academic discussions. These criteria will be established by consultation with the fighting organisations of the people. They will be forged in struggle, as individuals, groups and organisations whose speciality is cultural expression, through cultural manifestations, make dynamic their relations with both political and military formations.

Unity in Action

It is out of the experience of being part and parcel of these formations and of this struggle, in which unity is acted out through action against apartheid, that an understanding emerges as to what the priorities, sacrifices and aspirations of the people are, since it is these formations which embody the non-racial and democratic culture. The development and growth of the liberation movement leads to the complete isolation of the apartheid regime, and this growth of the liberation movement also strengthens the contribution to progress and peace.

It is when consultation takes place in action, in unity, that both in South Africa and internationally cultural workers and academics forge not only criteria but also fighting structures like the different anti-apartheid movements, solidarity groups, churches etc to effectively isolate apartheid culture wherever it rears its head. It is these growing structures which will also serve to host, on behalf of the wide world, the one-time backyard culture of the South African people.

In his Canon Collins Memorial Lecture in 1987, ANC President O.R. Tambo said:

> "The boycott campaigns from their inception in the late fifties were aimed at the total isolation of apartheid South Africa. This objective is inviolate and needs to be pursued with greater vigour. At the same time, we must take into account the changes that have taken place over time. In particular, as in almost every other human endeavour in South Africa, there has emerged a definable alternative culture — the people's . . ."

The people's culture cannot be boycotted. On the contrary it must receive the attention that it deserves and which is long overdue. People's culture is now a reality which, like a candle flame burning in a house with open windows, can be blown out. However, it will not be blown out if, as with every other aspect of struggle in South Africa, the weapon used to defend and promote it was forged through mass action. On a daily basis the audience for the people's culture must grow, both in South Africa and in the world at large.

We must observe that this people's culture emerges at a time when the white minority government seeks a mandate for war from both whites and blacks who support white domination in South Africa. Since the white elections, it is becoming obvious that the defence of apartheid will be undertaken by both blacks and whites who firmly believe in apartheid, who are constantly threatened by the growth of the liberation movement. The war mandate of the Pretoria regime is the escalation of destabilisation, the "seek and destroy" raids against the ANC and a systematic genocide and elimination of opposition in South Africa.

In the face of this, what is the task of the liberation movement and the international solidarity movement? The answer to that broad question is also, specifically, the answer to the question of the cultural and academic boycott. Cultural workers and academics must, more than ever before, realise that their responsibility is to organise themselves and become part of the mass democratic movement in South Africa. This mass democratic movement is the only process now left which is defining the forms of freedom of speech, movement and association, and must be defended by all.

Defending Freedom

In defending specific freedoms like freedom of the arts or academic freedom, cultural workers and academics must organise themselves at local, regional and national levels as have the workers, youth, women, and even community organisations. These cultural and academic structures must be formally linked and related to those structures which define, defend and also fight for the broad freedoms which are generated in the process of building a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa. The academic and cultural structures such as the recently formed Congress of South African Writers, Theatre Alliance of South Africa, Film Institute and Association of South Africa, South African Music Alliance and others, were formed to fight for the betterment of writers, theatre people, film-makers, musicians etc. However, it is essential that this fight be seen as part of a larger fight. This is not to undermine the importance of looking after the interests of the different cultural workers and academics, but to ensure that academics and cultural workers are not isolated and alienated from the society which, after all, has made them the cultural workers and academics they are, since they do not function independently of their environment.

In the same way that the masses of our people are engaged in the process of defining a new South Africa, through organisation and involvement in struggle, so too must be our academics and cultural workers. Their engagement in struggle is a process of defining a consensus on the priorities of the future, on people's education, on how as a free people we will deal with the very serious and important question of language in our country, on issues of health and all other related matters which will arise in any new and free society. The definition of that society is taking place now during the struggle, and the cultural and academic boycott is part of that process.

THE XUMA-NAICKER-DADOO PACT

On March 9, 1947, Dr. A.B. Xuma, President of the African National Congress, Dr. G.M. Naicker, President of the Natal Indian Congress, and Dr. Y.M. Dadoo, President of the Transvaal Indian Congress, at the conclusion of a joint meeting, the first in the history of the Congresses, issued a statment headed: "Joint Declaration of Co-operation". That statement has come to be known as the Xuma-Naicker-Dadoo Pact, the 40th anniversary of which was celebrated last year.

In the declaration the Congresses declare that for "the future progress, goodwill, and good race relations and for the building of a united, greater and free" society, the fundamental condition is the extension of full political rights "to all sections of the South African people". In doing so, they proclaimed their unambiguous rejection of the inferior status imposed on them by a political system based upon colonial exploitation and colour/race discrimination, and their firm commitment to a common citizenship and a common nationhood.

In a socio-political environment in which virtually every aspect of life was more or less tainted by colonial-racist concepts and conduct, the immediate purpose was to clear the air, state their goals, and chart the way forward for their organisations and the communities they represented to initiate and forge purposeful and practical co-operation.

In the declaration the Congress pledged: "The fullest co-operation between the African and Indian peoples . . . "; appealed "to all democratic and freedom-loving citizens of South Africa to support fully and co-operate in the struggle" for ending racial discrimination, for guaranteeing human rights, and for extending full and equal political rights to all; issued a call ". . . that for the attainment of these objects it is urgently necessary that a vigorous campaign be immediately launched . . .".

The historical significance of the pact lies in the fact that two major segments of the population, with different historical backgrounds engaged separately in resisting common colonial and racist domination, came together into a conscious stream of common struggle. That the historical situation was ripe for this development is proved by the speed with which the pact was followed by the emergence of the Congress Alliance, the revolutionary national liberation movement.

The African National Congress, the major party to the pact and the natural leader in the liberation struggle, represented the indigenous inhabitants who had been dispossessed of their land and liberty in a series of colonial wars over a period of two and a half centuries. The British, who occupied the country in 1806, attracted by a land in which Europeans could settle, vigorously pursued the wars of conquest. The discovery of diamonds in the 1860's (and gold soon after) provided a powerful further stimulus and the scale and pace of war was sharply accelerated. Divided by British colonial policy and assailed by the then world's most powerful professional armies, equipped with the most modern weapons, nation after African nation, despite unsurpassed courage and unparalleled heroism, was defeated, the Ndebele being the last to fall in 1893. The resurgence of resistance led by Bambata in 1906 was mercilessly and brutally crushed.

No Surrender

Though overpowered in battle and burdened by the most brutal system of racist colonialism in history, the African people did not surrender their inalienable right to be free or their determination to regain their land. Among the bitter lessons of defeat, they were acutely conscious of the part that their inability to join forces and devise a common strategy had played. In the political organisations that sprang up subsequently in different parts of the country, this desire for unity gathered momentum and grew in strength and urgency. It found its full expression when the ANC was founded in 1912.

The Indian component of the population appears on the South African scene from 1860 onwards. In India, British power had been established for more than a hundred years. The abortive Indian War of Independence (the so-called Indian Mutiny) had been ruthlessly put down in 1857. Indian indentured labourers were imported into Natal both to hasten the process of dispossession of land (the bitterest and bloodiest Zulu Wars still lay ahead) and to secure suitable labour to exploit its agricultural potential. "Free" Indians, mostly merchants and clerks, followed in their wake. The circumstances did not engender in them an awareness that they had really left their motherland to settle permanently in another country, that in the course of time, their (and their descendants') ties with India would inevitably become devitalized and frail; that in the new country, they were destined to become part of a new reality, participants in the creation of a new history, shaping and being shaped by a new life that they would be building together with the other inhabitants.

When Mahatma Gandhi arrived in Natal in 1893, many traders still maintained close ties with the families and village communities from which they had come. Indians still thought in terms of India as belonging to an Indian nation with, despite differences in language and religion, a distinct cultural heritage, tradition, history, religion, social customs and practices which sets them apart from white rulers and native Africans alike.

In India, the political renaissance was only just beginning. The first session of the Indian National Congress met in 1885. Pandit Nehru observes: "In these early days the Congress pleaded for reform; it criticised the administration, but it accepted British hegemony in India..."

Gandhi, observing and experiencing the hardships inflicted by legal and administrative discrimination upon Indians in Natal and Transvaal, was soon leading them into struggle against these conditions. It was to India and the Indian National Congress that the young Gandhi turned for advice and support. In all the struggles that followed, he led them as Indians. Since the imperial Government of India had consented to the export of labour to Natal, Gandhi focussed heavily on the need to win its support and the support of Indian public opinion.

After the departure of Gandhi, the South African Indian Congress retained this perspective. It was fortified and strengthened by Sastri, the first Indian Agent-General in South Africa, who claimed "Indians could not make common cause with Africans without alienating the right of intervention on their behalf by the Government of India. External relations gave Indians a distinctive status within South African society."

Nevertheless, the self-identification of the Indian was already changing in character. The imprint of South African reality was becoming an expanding element in the remoulding of that identity. This process was substantially assisted by the advice of Mrs Sarijini Naidu, a legendary leader of the Indian National Congress, in South Africa in 1926 to take part in the discussions that led up to the Cape Town Agreement of 1927. She was made Honorary President and led the South African Indian Congress delegation to India. She strongly advised that the future for Indians lay in making common cause with the African people.

Common experiences were already stimulating the growth of a common South African consciousness. The oppressor was common to all oppressed groups. While the laws discriminating against Africans were different from those against Indians or Coloureds, and while, in protesting against their effects or in opposing new ones, each engaged in separate or isolated struggles, invariably the assault would be renewed, often in altered guise. Each law in turn served as a launching pad for a more draconian successor. In the result, despite the race and colour-conscious exclusiveness fostered by Government policy — and without minimising its effects — the sense of shared oppression promoted countervailing tendencies. These tendencies received strong support from the Communist Party and it was the leading role of the communists that saw the emergence of the National Liberation League in 1935. The Non-European United Front, formed in 1938, reached all parts of the country. The demand for a common struggle was growing apace. In the context it was a revolutionary demand, and its revolutionary character was reflected in the changes taking shape in the strategy of the national organisations. This was seen most sharply in the Indian Congresses where the old reformist leadership was challenged by a new militant bloc led by Dr Dadoo in Transvaal and Dr Naicker in Natal. It led to the Indian Passive Resistance Campaign of 1946, the campaign that was to have a powerful thrust on the growth of a united liberation struggle.

Profound Impression

This made such a profound impression on the ANC that at its annual conference in December 1946 it adopted a series of resolutions. The ANC paid tribute to the resisters "...who have by their great passive resistance campaign...directed the attention of the world to the policy of race discrimination", and declared "...its firm determination to continue the struggle against white domination...and to this end...instructs the incoming National Executive Committee to consider the possibilities of closer co-operation with the national organisations of the other non-Europeans in the common struggle."

The first meeting of the NEC was held in February 1947. It considered these resolutions as well as a letter from the Joint Passive Resistance Council which was leading the passive resistance campaign. It invited the Natal and Transvaal Indian Congresses to a joint meeting the following month.

The Xuma-Naicker-Dadoo Pact was the result. The foundation had thus been laid upon which the Congress Alliance, at the head of which was the African National Congress, was built.

Under the continuing leadership of the ANC which had adopted its famous Programme of Action in 1949, it was this liberation front which planned, launched and led the Defiance Campaign of 1952. It was this Congress Alliance which conceived and mobilised for the Congress of the People which adopted the historic Freedom Charter in 1955. To this Alliance were attracted the most advanced, most dedicated and the most revolutionary forces among Africans, Whites, Indians and Coloureds in our country.

The vigilant pursuit of unity represented by this Alliance and its leadership in determined and relentless struggle continues to win ever-increasing support and participation of our people and has brought our struggle for national liberation within sight of our goal. It is the guarantee that the apartheid system will be dismantled and the apartheid regime overthrown.

NAMIBIA: SOUTH AFRICA'S NEO-COLONIAL STRATEGY IN CRISIS

by Simon Zhu Mbako

"All these [collaborationist structures] are linked up together. They form mismatched pieces of an untenable tapestry which the Botha regime is trying to put together in a vain attempt to forestall inevitable defeat." (Sam Nujoma, 1986)

The dominant reality of contemporary colonial Namibian society in the 1980's is one of increasing critical balance between liberation and an attempted neo-colonial solution. The basis of the neo-colonial strategy is the recognition of the political strength and effects of the armed struggle waged by SWAPO and the attempt to develop a political, military, socio-economic and cultural apparatus with one fundamental characteristic — an anti-SWAPO alliance. The major objective of the neo-colonial strategy involves the search for active support of African 'privileged' sections, as well as the mobilisation of the population around the lowest common denominator on anti-SWAPO attitudes in an attempt to indigenise the struggle against SWAPO and turn the colonial struggle into a civil war. A corollary of this new strategy is the movement away from ethnic to class politics. The most important collaborative structures are the so-called Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU), South West Africa Territory Force (SWATF), South West African Police (SWAPOL) and the military-organised socio-psychological organisations.

The neo-colonial strategy intensifies the political problem dramatically by producing unintended dynamic effects. The very same measures introduced by the South African colonial regime to create support for the collaborative structures, also produces pro-SWAPO support. It produces less unity among the collaborative forces and more unity among the progressive forces. An editorial in the *Windhoek Observer* (25/3/1983) summing up the political crisis in Namibia states that:

> 'When they [South Africa and its imperialist allies] thought the creation of an anti-SWAPO front would be an easy task, they have driven more people into the hands of this movement.'

The aim of this paper is to analyse the dynamic effects emanating from the neo-colonial strategy i.e. the balance of forces that are at play. The first part of the paper locates the political conditions giving rise to the neo-colonial strategy. The second part analyses the political crisis within the so-called TGNU. The third part gives a brief analysis of the measures taken to effect a neo-colonial solution and the fourth is devoted to the new forms of popular resistance against collaborative structures at the political, industrial, military and socio-economic levels. Emphasis will also be put on the counter-strategies adopted by the South African government and its imperialist allies to the popular demand for independence.

The ruling forces of the imperialist countries are only interested in a pro-imperialist settlement in Namibia to guarantee so-called stable conditions within which the extraction of strategic minerals and lucrative raw materials can continue in the profitable climate of colonial exploitation. Reagan's policy of constructive engagement had as its cardinal aim the search for a political solution to the Namibian conflict which will not allow the majority to truly exercise their democratic rights, to control their own economy or to achieve true political independence. The Washington inspired 'linkage' policy of making Namibian independence conditional on the withdrawal of Cuban forces from sovereign Angola was introduced to serve one major purpose: to halt the progress made by the Western Contact Group, thereby enabling South Africa to build up its neo-colonial structures in Namibia.

Already the cracks in the facade of the neo-colonial strategy in Namibia are becoming visible: the emergence of the /Ai Gams Conference, the emergence of white liberal alliances, the siding of some white professionals with SWAPO, numerous victories of PLAN, the emergence of militant trade unions and students' revolts, as well as increased resistance to military conscription.

1. The Roots of the Conflict

To understand the political crisis in Namibia today, one needs to look back to the 1960's and 70's. The 1959 Windhoek shooting of peaceful demonstrators and the subsequent crackdown on the Ovamboland People's Organisation did not particularly defuse popular struggles. Instead it increased workers' militancy. The initial limited conflict revolving around localised struggles confined to the contract workers was widened on the basis of an identity of interests until it became a common experience of the whole Namibian working class, resulting in the creation of an organisational political instrument in 1960, SWAPO, which focused the struggle on the conquest of state power. It is thus the workers who created a political party with the goal of recapturing control of the state. The ability of OPO to organise non-contract workers in the 1959 demonstrations was an expression of transcending ethnic barriers and artificial divisions between different categories of worker. The transformation of labour consciousness into political consciousness in the context of a complex colonial race-ethnic structure has been a result of the social and economic experience of the workers' struggle.

SWAPO henceforth adopted a strategy of waging political, diplomatic and military struggle concurrently. The launching of armed struggle in 1966 expressed the need for self-reliance in the fight for independence. The curtailment of political mobilisation through the arrest and deportation of many SWAPO leaders to Robben Island, including the banning of SWAPO meetings and the restrictions of house arrest, gave rise to open workers' struggle. The climax was reached in 1971/2 with the longest and most highly organised nation-wide strike in the history of Namibia. The strike expressed the desire of workers for the total dismantling of the contract labour system and an end to colonial rule, culminating in the emergence of the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW) in 1977.

The 1971/2 strike was caused, among other things, by the super-exploitation of the contract workers, the decline of the economy, low wages, unemployment, poor working and living conditions and the failure of the international community to resolve the question of Namibia. The leadership in the strike and the new labour movement were effective because they emerged organically from the working class and were able to organise underground, invisible to the employers and colonial state. SWAPO's concurrent political mobilisation with the armed struggle had a strong bearing on the workers' action. Not only did the strikers adopt SWAPO's strategy of political mobilisation, but they demanded immediate independence. The independence of Angola through armed struggle strengthened SWAPO's political and armed struggle. Many young Namibians left the country to take up arms. Given this mounting pressure the South African government was forced to decide how to defuse the politcal crisis.

1.2. Political Uncertainty and Economic Crisis

The neo-colonial strategy must be understood as a response to a number of problems which developed during the era of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) internal settlement. Namibia is a very rich country and is rated as the fourth largest mineral producer in Africa (CIIR, 1983). However, her economy has been failing to perform to expected standards because of the unprecedented crisis the country is facing. The colonial authorities ascribe the economic and financial crises to a number of varying factors; low world market prices for copper, diamonds etc, the weakness of the rand and lack of export markets (*Windhoek Observer*, 15/10/83).

In reality there are more important reasons. For instance, the multi-millionaire Harry Oppenheimer, chairman of Anglo American Corporation, pointed out that as a result of political uncertainty 'multi-nationals were unsure of their future here after the country had gained independence'. (*Windhoek Observer* 4/6/83). The inability to find a credible political alternative to SWAPO prompted Mr Jannie De Wet, member of the white Administration, to pose a desperate question in the cabinet: 'What would be the use of a new political dispensation, if the economic and financial factors were simply disregarded?' (*Windhoek Observer*, 8/10/83). The cost of ethnic administration and the war was becoming prohibitive. The cost of the colonial war increased from R1 million a day in 1980 to R4 million a day in 1987. As a result of the steady growth of guerilla activity there was an increase in the transfer of agricultural resources to South Africa by settler farmers between 1981 and 1984. Farmers were selling up 'to seek a new life' in South Africa leading to a decline in commercial agriculture (*Windhoek Advertiser*, 21/8/81).

2. The Neo-Colonial Outfits

Unlike the DTA 'internal settlement' which sought the support of the tribal chiefs, the neo-colonial strategy under the so-called TGNU seeks to create a strong petty-bourgeois class which is not only increasingly friendly to an evolutionary process but also to capitalism itself. Since the demise of the DTA 'interim' government in 1983, the neo-colonial strategy of building up state structures has been sharply accelerated. The creation of an elaborate system of government based on ethnic structures made it possible for the development of bureaucratic strata. For instance there were 37,639 civil servants in 1980 and by 1985 there were 43,884 — 20,804 in central administration and 23,080 in ethnic governments. The ratio is roughly one civil servant to every 22 Namibians (*Windhoek Observer*, 10/1/83). These African bureaucrats have been able to utilise their newly acquired positions to accumulate wealth through massive corruption involving state funds and high salaries which are invested in cars, luxurious houses, farms and trade. By African standards these collaborators earn very high salaries of between R28,000 and R32,000 (Mbako, 1985).

A number of neo-colonial outfits have been created to bolster the development of small African capitalists. A Private Sector Foundation (PSF) was opened in 1984 with the objective of training small employers. The Institute of Management and Leadership Training (IMTL) was created to meet the 'need and necessity to support and strengthen the principles of a free market economy and social order' (*The Namibian*, 10/4/87). As a way to help small businessmen in the strategy of pacifying agitated workers the PSF organises seminars in 'assertiveness and aggression'. The purpose of providing training in skills related to capitalist enterprises is to inculcate the fundamental capitalist values in the emerging African entrepreneurs.

The state-sponsored First National Development Corporation (FNDC) has established small commercial complexes known as Black Chain Markets in African townships country-wide. Prospective African businessmen are accomodated in these complexes at low rentals. For example, the Arandis R250,000 complex encompassed six units of 60 square metres each, let at R60 per month. Previously many of these African tenants conducted their business at home or in backyards. To gain support they Africanise these complexes in terms of names. The Katutura complex is known as 'Menarovandu' meaning 'for the benefit of the people'. Although these complexes are under the complete control of FNDC, which exploits the African entrepreneurs, they provide the latter with the means whereby they can further their own accumulation of wealth thereby creating the nucleus for further capitalist development. The extension of credit facilities for African entrepreneurs served a similar purpose.

The handing over of directorship of foreign owned enterprises to Africans is a new political strategy to create pre-conditions for a dependent capitalist development. For example, a new wholesale centre, International Cosmetics House (Pty) Ltd., was opened in January 1986 with a black managing director. The centre provides various types of hairdressing products and equipment which are furnished mainly by a larger hairdressing company, Anita (Pty.) Ltd. based in Cape Town. In addition a few Africans have been made shareholders and members of the board of directors of large corporations and other private institutions.

Conditions for small capitalist farmers are being created. Agricultural training centres are being created in the various 'homelands'. In conformity with the capitalist form of land tenure, Dr. Koos Korf, secretary for the white Administration, argued that 'the communal land ownership should be changed to private ownership, and unutilised land must be transformed into productive units' (*Die Republikein*, 23/11/86).

The South African government has also implemented a strategy to buy the allegiance of the African professional/semi professional workers in the health and education sectors. Recent increases in teachers' and nurses' salaries, for example, mean that teachers and nurses in some sectors earn more than eleven times as much as domestic workers. Secondary school teachers earn between R12,000 and R18,000 a year. In addition they receive 100 per cent interest free mortgage or monthly rent rebate including housing allowances of R200 - R250, a month, medical aid and pension schemes. In recent years some of the existing institutions of education and training have been modified in accordance with the fast changing economic and political processes. The creation of the University Centre for Studies in Namibia (TUCSIN) in 1987 has been one of the major developments in this field. The rapid creation and expansion of educational institutions serve two purposes: firstly to expand the activities of the professional class; secondly, to produce an indigenous capitalist oriented class at a very fast pace.

The transnational corporations are interested parties in the attempt to create a neo-colonial power structure, although the degree to which their interests coincide precisely with those of the South African regime is open to question. Attempts by TNC's to raise the educational, technical and professional level of Africans through the provision of scholarships abroad, on-the-job training and creation of specific training institutions serve three purposes: firstly, it helps to meet the growing shortage of manpower resulting from the increasing exodus of white personnel; secondly, it is designed to enhance the TNC image with a view to continued operation in the post-independence era; thirdly, it helps to create a social base for international capital in the event of a neo-colonial solution.

With the attempt to create a 'national' army and police as distinct from the South African military and police forces, Africans both conscripted and recruited have become a significant element in neo-colonial strategy. Although the top officer corps is still white and answerable only to Pretoria. African officers of the lower middle ranks are currently being trained in South Africa's military institutions as well as military camps within Namibia. A military training school has been created in Okahandja for this particular purpose. As a means to force young people into the army, students are not allowed to undertake post-graduate studies before completion of 'national service' (*Die Republikein*, 30/10/86). High salaries and rewards are used as incentives. Economic necessity has been exploited by the military for the purpose of conscription. Concurrent with the creation of army structures has been the creation of army-directed quasi-cultural organisations to win the hearts and minds of the local population.

3. Divisions within the TGNU

Being a creation of the South African government, the TGNU has obeyed the orders of the South African government. Botha made it clear to the TGNU that the solution for Namibia should be seen in 'South Africa's clear-cut interest...which it is not prepared to relinquish' (*The Nation*, 1985). The TGNU cannot afford to antagonise its colonial master by changing the system as it deems desirable or by alienating South Africa's white allies within it. South Africa's restrictive political directives have forced the TGNU into a situation of confusion, indecision and inability to make any type of impact needed for it to become politically credible. In fact it has increased divisions within the TGNU with the result that any decision taken to date has endangered the existence of the TGNU. The crisis that has surrounded discussion of every fundamental issue indicates the dominant role held by the white ethnic government. Conflict not only exists between white and African collaborators but also among whites as well as among African collaborators. However, differences within the collaborative factions concentrate on peripheral issues, rather than the burning question of independence.

The issue of education will suffice to illustrate divisions in TGNU. Two years after the introduction of 'multi-racial' education, white schools remain exclusively white. The white groups continue to reject racial integration. The ultra-right wing Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP) argues that racial integration 'negates racial and ethnic differences' (*Windhoek Advertiser*, 10/1/86). The ruling SWA National Party (NP) threatened to go to court or petition the South African State president on grounds that the 'multi-racial' policy was 'curbing the democratic function of the White Administration' (*The Namibian*, 13/3/87). It further argued that it could only register children in white schools if they are classified as members of the white population by virtue of speaking fluent English and Afrikaans.

Recently the Rehoboth government (for coloureds) made a decision to refuse all 'non-Baster' children access to Rehoboth schools because of their 'low intellect' and 'different' cultural backgrounds. Implicitly cultural aspects which are referred to are used to perpetuate racial exclusion and ethnic bias. The building of new elitist schools for Africans to advance the image of the TGNU does not mean desegregation, because the white schools will remain exclusively white and under-utilised. African collaborators have threatened to resign if schools are not desegregated, but to no effect.

3.1 Divisions within the White Groups/Parties

Divisions within the white groups/parties are not new but have become serious under the TGNU. The Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) 'internal settlement' of 1975 led to conflict within the white groups. The ultra right-wing HNP opposed the DTA policy of 'multi-racialism' advocating the preservation of white 'purity'. In 1977 the 'liberal' faction of the NP under Dirk Mudge broke away on the issue of desegregation and formed the Republican Party advocating deracialisation in the social sector. They believed that the inclusion of 'tribal' leaders in the 'interim' government and the extension of limited political reforms to a section of the African population would secure economic growth and stability. It was supported by Botha and monopoly capital. A few extreme right-wing elements within the NP who saw the 'new dispensation' as a threat to the political and economic privileges of the whites broke away and formed AKTUR to oppose the DTA's policy of 'multi-racialism' and calling for the preservation of Namibia to remain part of South Africa.

The indecision and apparent absence of a meaningful policy to transform the country prompted the NP leader and member of the TGNU 'cabinet' to pose a desperate question: 'the man in the street knows what SWAPO stands for, but does he know where the transitional government is going?' (*The Namibian*, 21/2/86). Recently, Jannie De Wet, Minister of Agriculture, seemed to reply to this question when he said: 'the future depends on whether we are going to allow SWAPO to take over power' (*Namibia Nachrichten*, 6/7/87). Inter-party rivalry and personality conflicts have also led to a split among the white members in the TGNU.

Recently the leader of the ruling SWA National Party and former chairman of the TGNU resigned from both his party and the TGNU to establish his own non-political organisation. He made it clear that 'no goal can be reached' from this 'disunity' (*Die Republikein*, 1/2/87). As far as he is concerned people not only disagree on specific issues but also on strategy and goals and they are further driven into opposing forces. This breakaway by a diehard Afrikaner leader indicates the serious divisions that are emerging within the ruling class. The inability to handle conflicts and to devise a consistent policy on the question of Namibia, intensifies political polarisation.

4. New Forms of Popular Resistance

Since the inception of the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU) there has been widespread and enduring internal popular resistance which has manifested itself in a number of forms. Resistance has begun to take on a more organised expression. There has been a visible indication of broadening efforts to mobilise and rally all social sectors against the South African colonial government and its collaborating allies in Namibia at local and national level. At the same time the political context within which this has occurred has become more firmly identified with the politics of liberation. There has also been a sharp upsurge in the visibility of support for SWAPO's struggle for national independence.

4.1. The /Ai Gams Conference

At the national level resistance found expression in the emergence of the /Ai Gams Conference in 1986 — an alliance of social forces that are opposed to South African neo-colonial schemes. The initial meeting formulated strategies to oppose the TGNU and measures to effect the implementation of UN Resolution 435. This conference was convened by the Council of Churches in Namibia and was attended by representatives of SWAPO, all churches in Namibia (excluding the pro-apartheid Dutch Reformed Church) and eleven different political and cultural groups, all of which share a common stand in rejection of the South African colonial occupation. It represented workers, professionals, students, women's organisations and cultural groups. It is important to note that some of these groups have not in the past shown any interest in confronting the colonial power openly.

In tems of class/political outlook, prominent leaders from the emerging African professionals, teachers, clergy, trade unionists and health workers attended the Conference. Their commitment ranged from those with moderate political stances to ex-Robben Island militant leaders. The /Ai Gams Declaration explicitly supports the aims and objectives of SWAPO. However, it cannot be considered a political wing of SWAPO, even though some of its members are veterans who initiated the armed struggle. Its declaration calls, among other things, for the inalienable rights of the Namibian people to self-determination and independence, the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 435; the withdrawal of the South African army from Namibia; an end to forced conscription of Namibians; as well as the dismantling of the TGNU, SWATF and SWAPOL. The /Ai Gams Conference adopted a clear grassroots strategy 'to mobilise and conscientise the Namibian masses so as to actively resist the status quo'. The implementation of its strategy will depend on each group/party mobilising in its own area. It is expected that the differing experiences will serve to strengthen this new front by allowing mass participation and greater responsibility at regional and local levels.

The influence and popularity of the Namibian Council of Churches has for some time been recognised in the face of colonial brutality. This institution has championed the call for national unity and has offered a strong rallying point for a population increasingly subjected to military repression as well as racial and ethnic division. Church leaders have been among those most vocal in speaking out on the question of self-determination and independence. They have been explicit also in condemning the military violence. Bishop Dumeni whose brother was killed recently by the army said:

> 'Namibians are sick and tired of the cruel and barbaric treatment perpetrated by the South African army forces against us. The church cannot remain silent while the people are suffering unjustly.'

Thus the church has perceived the need for the right of the masses to take action to defend themselves. The church has also been calling on the South African regime to sign a ceasefire with SWAPO. The initiative of the church in organising the /Ai Gams Conference into an anti-colonial force points out the fact that the church expresses the right of the masses to engage in popular resistance.

4.2. The Emergence of White Liberals

The multi-political, non-racial character and broad programme of overt and declared opposition of the /Ai Gams Conference to the South African colonial occupation of Namibia activated the growth of new political forces. In November 1986 a group of liberal whites established the non-racial

Namibia Peace Plan (NPP) whose major objective is to seek and encourage internationally recognised 'reconciliation and peace' in terms of the implementation of Resolution 435 (*Windhoek Advertiser*, 26/11/86). According to its chairman advocate Bryan O'Linn, the group has no intention of acting in opposition to or in competion with existing pro-435 parties, but seeks to supplement their activities. According to the chairman the group was a result of the fact that the white population had shown a particularly strong bias against Resolution 435 for unjustifiable reasons.

In tems of influence, the group represents the political and economic interests of a significant section of the white community in Namibia. Most important the group has held talks with SWAPO, UNIN representatives as well as Zambian and Zimbabwean government authorities on the future of Namibia, particularly on how to break the stalemate over the implementation of 435. From a historical and political perspective, this is a very significant development in Namibia. Since the beginning of South African colonial rule in 1915, the Afrikaners and Germans were close allies in the oppression and exploitation of the African majority. Unlike in South Africa where a strong liberal, social democratic and communist tradition developed in the 1940's, in Namibia there have been almost no individuals who could even be described as liberals. Racial segregation has been more stringent in Namibia than in South Africa. It is, therefore, a very important development that some members of the white community have realised the need to resolve the irreconcilable contradiction between the colonial power and the majority of the oppressed. In response to this new development SWAPO pointed out that:

> 'We believe these pragmatic and ardent white Namibian opponents of racism command enormous moral authority. The right of every Namibian to make his/her own social, political and ideological decision and choice in the land of his/her birth must be respected. For mistrust, fear and suspicion between Namibians distort perceptions of the real world.' (March, 1987)

4.2. Students' Popular Revolt

The on-going popular student revolt in Namibia is a direct product of the century old colonial oppression, racial discrimination and imposed ethnic divisions. Since 1984, student protests have become a fundamental component of popular resistance. The creation of NANSO in 1984 was one of the most significant developments over the past three years considering the spontaneous and sporadic student protests of the 1970's. Students at state-run schools, such as, Augustineum, Ongwediva and Concordia have become increasingly militant. Augustineum College in Windhoek has been a scene of student strikes over Bantu Education and the presence of elements of the notorious para-military unit on school premises. Ongwediva pupils boycotted classes in protest at receiving study guides in the Afrikaans medium and a general lack of study materials. About 200 students at the Academy of Tertiary Education staged a week stay-away followed by a one-day political rally in solidarity with the Ongwediva students. The period 1984-1986 was one in which NANSO organised a national campaign against forced military conscription and a festival of resistance to counter the SADF military-organised 'cultural' organisations, as well as mounting the call for progressive students to join church-run schools. Most of these activities were organised in cooperation with the churches and the SWAPO Youth League (*Windhoek Advertiser,* 14/11/86).

More and more schools and colleges have become arenas of active resistance and revolutionary upsurge. Over ten schools boycotted classes in 1985 alone, calling for the withdrawal of the paramilitary personnel at schools and an end to the use of military personnel as teachers. Students also demanded the end of colonialism and the implementation of Resolution 435. These activities were coordinated through School Action Committees established by members of NANSO at the various colleges. The occupationist army responded forcefully to the point where they arrested members of these committees and expelled them from schools. In March 1987 the daily battle of the students led to the closure of seven colleges in various parts of the country.

Today no single day passes without direct confrontation between the students and colonial authorities, the government or military. This new social force has played a significant role in contemporary popular resistance. The creation of a single student national organisation is a clear manifestation that students are slowly rising above imposed racial and ethnic differences. The organising efforts of NANSO convinced hundreds of hesitant young men to see the need for active political opposition to the neo-colonial strategy as well as support for SWAPO. At a NANSO Conference in January 1986 the students passed a resolution expressing support for the NANSO cadres who had left the country to avoid military conscription (*The Namibian,* 17/1/86).

The South African regime and its collaborators in Namibia have recognised the tremendous energy of the students and are now attempting to counter the activities of NANSO. They have set up Parents' Committees and school-controlled Students' Councils including military-organised quasi-cultural organisations whose aim is to indoctrinate students about the irrelevance of socialism, communism and the 'obsoleteness' of UN

Resolution 435 in Namibia, as well as, emphasising the importance of ethnic loyalty. Coupled with this are discussions on the importance of capitalism and 'democracy' (*Windhoek Advertiser,* 25/11/86). In order to counter the activities of NANSO, the South African colonial authorities have encouraged the establishment of a new student body, the Namibian National Council of Students (NACOS). According to its spokesman the new organisation aimed to be 'neutral' because 'education was not a political issue' (*Windhoek Advertiser,* 6/11/86). Accordingly the organisation was set up because 'in a developing society like Namibia there are different views' (ibid). By implication this is a clear expression of its opposition to NANSO which calls for the reconstruction of a completely new system of education in Namibia.

Transnational Corporations operating in Namibia have allocated vast amounts of money to training a new generation of leaders in specialised institutions in Namibia and abroad. This new programme to train and inculcate capitalist and ethnic values as well as acceptance of the obsolescence of Resolution 435 in students, has, however, had little impact. Yet it represents an important element of the strategy to defuse popular resistance.

4.3. Resurgence of militant trade unions

Trade union activities have been restricted for more than 35 years through the Wage and Industrial Conciliation Ordinance of 1952. Given stringent racial oppression the only African trade union, the National Union of Namibian Workers affiliated to SWAPO, has been working underground since the 1971/2 national strike. The recent emergence of trade union activity is an indication of increased resistance against the entire exploitative colonial system. The Mineworkers' Union of Namibia (MUN) and the Namibian Food and Allied Union (NAFAU) both affiliated to the NUNW have been in the forefront of militant action. Since 1986 they have emerged as the two important unions in Namibia that have struck fear into the heart of the colonial regime and international capital. They emerged in industries which have historically opposed African unionisation and which have reaped vast profits as a result of the super-exploitation of the contract workers.

Since their emergence there have been more strikes in 1986 and 1987 in the mining and food industries than in any other part of the economy. Up to 25,000 workers organised political rallies and prayer meetings country-wide to mark International Workers' Day on the 1 May 1987 under the banners of the NUNW (*Windhoek Observer,* 2/5/87). Over 5,000 workers at the Tsumeb Copper Mines defied an offer of triple pay meant to stop them attending the

NUNW rally and march (*The Namibian,* 17/5/87). Although some workers were threatened with death by the military and police at roadblocks on the way to the rally, the marches demonstrated the strength of the workers and the relative powerlessness of the South African neo-colonial machinery in Namibia.

The rapid growth of trade union activity reflects the poor socio-economic conditions of workers and the need for worker representation in the industrial and commercial areas. In the mining, fishing and food industries African workers are frequently injured or killed through work place accidents. Similarly wages have remained stagnant in real terms since the 1960's. These are the key factors which have accelerated the pace of unionisation among African workers — a process which initially started in opposition to the hated contract labour system in the 1950's. Recently it has focused on bringing together progressive white and African workers, while at the same time isolating existing racial trade unions. However, the differences in wages and social status between African and white workers continue to create barriers to unity.

Similarly, racial and cultural differences tend to act as major obstacles to unity. Given these limitations the trade unions are still in the process of establishing themselves. Hence, the NUNW prioritises the creation of workers' steering committees in factories and mines country-wide and the need to support worker campaigns, rallies and strikes at the work place. The dismissal of striking workers and low wages are a prevalent phenomenon. Recently, approximately 5,000 striking miners have been sacked for demanding higher wages and review of past work related accidents with a view to gaining compensation. Although trade unions are committed to bettering the wages and working conditions of workers, this in turn has been central to the politics of liberation. Most trade unionists are members of and serve on the various branches of SWAPO.

Trade union resurgence and political militancy have forced the South African regime, collaborators and capitalist sector to seek means of controlling or defusing workers' militancy. International capital and European labour centres have also recognised the danger of the new trade unions as well as the success of mobilisation and self-organisation. These forces have been creating state-controlled trade unions as alternatives to the militant trade unions. For example, the South African regime in cahoots with the American AFL-CIO (US equivalent of the British TUC) have sponsored the creation of the so-called Namibia National Trade Union (NNTU) linked to the puppet TGNU. The AFL-CIO's international department has been mobilising support from other conservative Western trade union leaders, so as to obtain material aid and diplomatic support for these fake trade unions in Namibia. These bodies, however, lack support. It is, for example, estimated that out of the 500,000 Namibian labour force only 150 workers attended a 'May Day' march organised by NNTU, which had been heavily promoted by the right wing press and state-owned broadcasting corporation (*Windhoek Advertiser,* 4/5/87). Magistrates have been used to refuse permission for NUNW rallies as well as to prevent any NUNW posters being advertised in some towns. Similarly, the right wing press and the only state-owned broadcasting corporation refuse to advertise anything to do with NUNW or SWAPO (*Windhoek Observer,* 3/5/87).

Moreover, the African puppets are being used to rubber-stamp the repressive security legislation being initiated by the occupation army to suppress workers' militancy. For instance, at the end of 1985 the so-called Assembly passed the Wage and Industrial Conciliation Amendment Bill to impose new restrictions on labour organisations in Namibia. One of its key provisions prohibits 'non-residents' of Namibia from 'advocating, encouraging or promoting the establishment of trade unions in the country'. These restrictions are aimed at preventing the Namibian workers from organisational contact with militant trade unions in South Africa. It was initiated immediately after the South African National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) had started to work in close cooperation with the 4,000 member strong Workers' Action Committee at Namibia's Consolidated Diamond Mines (CDM) in Oranjemund.

Currently in an attempt to confuse workers, the South African regime and the puppets in the TGNU have declared the formerly white dominated trade unions 'multi-racial'. Although they have coopted a few Africans to serve on the executives of these trade unions, most of them remain white dominated staff associations amongst municipal workers, teachers, printers and rail workers. They have also created a so-called SWA Mineworkers' Union, formerly a white only union. There are today over 15 such trade unions in Namibia. These unions and associations are affiliated to the conservative SWA Confederation of Labour (SWACOL). They are mainly concerned with improving workers' conditions, while supporting the neo-colonial strategy. The overwhelming majority of the African labour force are members of the militant trade unions pursuing a strong stand on political independence as the priority. As long as the militant trade unions continue to play an important role and continue to galvanise and translate the popular opposition and sentiment into an active self-sustaining political weapon, they will continue to confront and challenge the social basis of colonialism.

4.4 Conscription and Resistance

Like other forms of colonial politics, conscription does not operate in a vacuum. There are social forces at work. As a sub-strategy within the neo-colonial strategy, conscription as a new form of colonial politics generated its own contradictions both within the African and white Namibian community. The major victims of the conscription drive have become the unemployed African and white youth, mainly those at the stage of completing their secondary education. Despite the claim made by the South African authorities that Africans are joining voluntarily, existing evidence suggests that the major forms of incorporation into the military have been the use of official coercion and the exploitation of poverty. As a result of poverty, for example, almost the entire San ('Bushmen') population has been drawn into the army. Some of the conscripts are attracted by financial offers or rewards made by SADF for information regarding SWAPO activities. Posters for rewards are scattered all over the so-called operational areas advertising the following information — R20,000 for the capture of a SWAPO commander, R10,000 for an 'external' official, R2,000 for an ordinary guerilla, R1,000 for information on guerilla whereabouts and R200 for locating a landmine.

The major basis for resisting conscription has been ideological. First, evaders argue that South Africa is occupying Namibia illegally and thus has no moral or political right to conscript Namibians into its colonial army. Second, they argue that they do not want to be forced into a situation whereby they would fight fellow Namibians against the ideals of freedom and justice. Recently, two Namibians resisting military call-up as from 12 January, 1987 to 12 January, 1989, filed a court application. In his objection to conscription, Edward Amporo stated that:

> 'If I were conscripted and forced to fight for South Africa's cause...I would necessarily be fighting against the very ideals and values I believe in...I would be upholding an ideology that promotes ethnicity and an undemocratic form of government — practices which I deeply resent' (*The Namibian*, 19/12/86).

In a similar vein, Alfons Kotjipati stated that: 'the SADF is used to protect the interests of South Africa and her appointed local puppets, therefore, the SWATF is not a national army' (ibid). The views expressed by these young militant Namibians reflect the political and ideological basis of objection to conscription. Objection to conscription among white and African Namibians tends to follow a similar pattern — refusal to serve in a foreign army whose aim is to perpetuate a colonial system; refusal to become instruments of their own subjugation; rejection of SWATF as an instrument designed to defend South Africa's neo-colonial structures; and finally, refusal on the basis of SWAPO membership.

Opposition to conscription brought many anti-colonial organisations together. SWAPO as the major anti-colonial driving force characterised the conscription threat as 'sowing the seeds for a harvest of future destabilisation...thus perpetuating the dependence and exploitative conditions' and rejected the penalties enforcing it. It also led to the creation of new anti-conscription committees. For instance, the Katutura Peoples' Action Committee organised public meetings to condemn conscription and mobilise opposition to it. An underground committee was also set up to help those wishing to leave the country as well as those ready to battle openly in court. SWAPO organised a grass roots rally attended by 3,000 activists all over the country to devise a counter-strategy to military call-up (*Windhoek Advertiser*, 15/12/1980). This was followed by a NANSO seminar in August 1984, which devised ways and means of countering conscription and the new cadet system. At this seminar the students extended support to the UDF and the End Conscription Campaign in South Africa and declared that SWAPO was the only movement that has at 'heart the liberation of Namibia from South Africa's illegal occupation' (*Rand Daily Mail*, 15/9/84).

Increasing repression and coercion have changed the perspective of the churches. Since the 1970's there has been a general conflict between churches and the colonial power on the issue of the extent to which the former should remain silent in the light of the rising oppression and upsurge of national liberation activity. Polarisation on the issue in the churches is a symptom of the polarisation of the whole Namibian society. In its mobilisational capacity and because of the increasing militarisation of the country most churches have changed their attitude from traditional religious pacifism to open confrontation or theology of liberation. The Council of Churches of Namibia opposes the conscription drive on the basis that 'coercion into military service...will create a situation of total civil war and elimination of opposition...' and has called for the implementation of Resolution 435. Even smaller progressive parties such as SWANU and the Social Democratic Party both vigorously opposed the conscription drive (*Windhoek Advertiser*, 15,21/11/84). Only the conservative DTA and right-wing HNP were in favour of forced conscription and even the latter feared a 'serious security risk of SWAPO members joining SWATF' (ibid).

In the face of mass opposition to conscription South Africa attempted to bring in Asian soldiers from the municipality of Durban as well as to enlist immigrants in Namibia. The business community, threatened by a further drain on the private sector's manpower, opposed forced conscription. A great number of immigrants, fearing conscription, considered leaving the country. A British immigrant, for example, stated that: 'we are here to work...there is no obligation to take up arms' (*Windhoek Advertiser*, 31/10/84). The introduction of compulsory conscription in Namibia went hand in hand with the creation of military directed socio-psychological quasi-cultural organisations.

4.5 Opposition to the Quasi-cultural Organisations

The introduction of a detailed programme of socio-psychological warfare in the so-called operational areas through the creation of quasi-cultural organisations under the direct control of SADF is part of South Africa's desperate endeavour to create and impose neo-colonial conditions. The master-mind behind the creation of these bodies is Dr. A. Pas Ques, a member of the Afrikaner secret organisation, the Broederbond, which is the architect of apartheid. A brief analysis of their constitutions reveals the real objectives of these organisations. For example, 'Etango (meaning sun) is a christian, anti-communist, non-political cultural organisation' and yet Etango 'aims at motivating the Ovambo people to resist SWAPO and any form of communist infiltration'. The objective of Ezuva in Okavango is, similarly, the preservation and promotion of the Kavango culture, which includes language, norms, customs, as well as 'the aspirations and aims of the nation as laid down in its history and tradition'. These quasi-cultural organisations are thus run on similar lines to the Broederbond by emphasising that 'ethnic' groups must have their own culture and land area. This is basically an ideology based on the promotion of racism and ethnicity. In a nutshell this sun-cult movement is further means by which the South African army seeks to arrest the liberation process in Namibia.

The logic of many years of variegated mass struggles against South African colonial rule has activated automatic widespread resistance to this sun-cult movement. It is this logic which places the might of the colonial state and its collaborative strategies at a strategic disadvantage. The weakness of counter-strategies/campaigns that operate through deception and coercion is that they do not take root readily. The subjects at whom they are directed are likely to question the motives. In order to counter the spread of the army-sponsored bodies, NANSO and the SWAPO Youth League organised a country-wide cultural festival as 'an effort towards the creation and building of a people's national culture of national resistance...to counter the cultural onslaught by South Africa on the people's culture'. The strategy was described as one of 'embarking upon revolutionary cultural performances' all over the country on a 'daily basis if need be' (*The Namibian*, 19/12/86).

The churches in their role of liberation described these fake organisations as agents of 'cultural imperialism' and called for Namibians 'to seek unity beyond racial barriers if they wished to liberate their country' (*The Namibian*, 20/2/87). Referring to the hopelessness of this sun-cult movement an ELOK church leader points out that:

> 'Soldiers have always been viewed as murderers, and this view will stay on regardless of the introduction of cultural wings that have been especially designed to confuse people'.

Thus, the political and ideological offensive of military directed organisations has not borne the desired results because they are run by an already rejected army and their counter-revolutionary strategies are based on deception and the promotion of outdated reactionary principles of ethnicity and racism. Namibia today bears no resemblance to pre-colonial policies. It follows from this that a 'revival' of a 'pure' African culture is at the same time a defence of the imposed 'homeland' system in Namibia.

The critical observation of events in the 1980's made by Sam Nujoma, the SWAPO President deserves to serve as a conclusion to this paper:

> 'Today SWAPO's authority and influence among the broad masses of the Namibian people confront the apartheid regime with a serious dilemma, because virtually all sections of the Namibian population have come to the realisation that SWAPO is the central factor in Namibia's equation, and that no serious political change can ever take place without its leading participation...The cumulative pressure of 27 years of heroic resistance and armed struggle has convinced the majority of the Namibian people, including the whites, that no amount of repression can reverse the surging tide of history towards Namibia's liberation. In particular the economic crisis which that pressure created has brought home to whites in Namibia the fact that continued South African colonialism has become not only a source of insecurity and instability in the country but also a serious fetter to Namibia's economic development. Many of them have become disillusioned with Pretoria's repeated idle boasting that its army of occupation 'has broken SWAPO's military backbone' at a time when PLAN is in fact pressing the occupation army to a debilitating stalemate. Many of them now recognise that this boasting is nothing but an illusion of an unpopular regime which has failed to discern the revolutionary vigour and resilience of its antagonists'. (*The Combatant*, April, 1987).

The struggle in Namibia has entered a new political dimension as the mass of the colonised and progressive sections of the white community are joining the ranks of the national liberation movement against colonialism. The process of white defection from the ranks of apartheid-cum-colonialism is surely going to increase as the struggle for liberation continues to intensify. Hence, the struggle must continue. As the Secretary of the SWAPO Women's Council, Gertrude Kandanga, explained: 'It is inevitable that in this struggle some of our people will die, but if it does not continue we will all die'.

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WORKERS, ORGANISE AND UNITE — JOIN THE SACP, ANC AND MK FOR FREEDOM AND SOCIALISM

Appeal circulated by the SACP underground in South Africa

We, the SACP militants in the Western Cape, extend our revolutionary greetings to all greetings to all our working class activists in the region and beyond. We salute those Western Cape comrades who have sacrificed their lives in our revolution. We remember the heroes and martyrs of the legendary Luthuli Detachment, who fought in Zimbabwe twenty years ago. We pay tribute especially to the fearless commissar and member of the Luthuli Detachment, comrade Basil February, who fell on that battlefield. We remember also, our two comrades, Jabu and Billy, who died fighting the enemy in Faure and New Crossroads.

By declaring the fourth State of Emergency and intensifying state terror, Botha and Malan have effectively turned our country into an armed camp. The ruling class's ruthless measures, born out of panic and desperation, have taken a heavy toll on all who stand up, clandestinely or publicly, for freedom and have greatly narrowed any hope of peaceful change to a free South Africa. The great majority of our people, particularly the black workers and youth, are not intimidated. State of Emergency, or no State of Emergency, they are determined to win their freedom, at whatever cost.

The strengthening of our mass organisations and trade unions and their leadership is the key to our victory. Our Party, being the most experienced and seasoned in underground work, has therefore a tremendous responsibility to assist our people to organise for people's power and socialism.

It is necessary that the party must have the closest links with the workers, trade unions and other mass organisations. Our Party's political programme is correct because it champions the interests of our working people. It is guided by, and imbued with, the scientific theory of Marxism-Leninism, which has been proved time and again to be the only correct policy. An adequate machinery must exist to convey Party policy to the people and to enable them to carry it out effectively. This is our immediate priority, which we can only fulfil if we greatly increase our membership, our effectiveness and the understanding and self-sacrificing work of each and every member.

Our fighting programme, *The Road to South African Freedom*, was adopted as far back as 1962. However, it still provides us with an invaluable tool to raise the political level of our membership and to attract and enrol many new members. Thousands of our people, especially our working men, women and youth, are able to absorb the straightforward message of our programme and are ready to fight and die for it. It must be made the basis of a vigorous and dynamic campaign of education, both within the Party and amongst revolutionary workers, militant youth and intellectuals who have not yet joined our ranks.

The present 'state of siege' mentality of the ruling class and the massive resources being devoted to police activities have made the work of all democratic opposition, and especially our Party, far more dangerous and difficult. To meet the dangers, we need to be filled with unshakeable courage and confidence in our Party, our class, our people and our cause. We have every reason for confidence.

We look at four areas that demand greater ideological clarity and organisational seriousness:

1. Key theoretical principles of a working class vanguard party.
2. The labour movement and the worker's charter.
3. The need for armed revolution.
4. Security and vigilance in the mass democratic and trade union movements.

Key Principles of a Working Class Vanguard Party

South Africans are more and more realising socialism is the only real solution to our problems of poverty, unemployment, oppression and exploitation.

Within the trade union movement, the slogans and ideals of socialism are taking root as never before. The young lions of our country, the youth, are also in the forefront of this struggle.

Of course, there are now all kinds of 'socialists' jumping on the bandwagon. In fact, there is currently a fierce ideological battle taking place between the ultra-left idea of 'socialism now', led by a worker's party based on trade unions, and the Marxist-Leninist concept of a working class vanguard party as advanced by the SACP. It is against this background that we, SACP militants, would like to reiterate what we consider to be the key principles of the vanguard party of the working class.

A: The role of a vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory — Marxism-Leninism.

The ideas relating to the vanguard party are closely associated with the name of Lenin, the leader of the great October Socialist Revolution. Lenin not only inspired the Russian Revolutionaries with the necessity for such a party in the struggle for socialism, but worked unceasingly for its creation. Such a revolutionary working class party, armed with the ideas of Marx and Engels, was formed in Russia at the turn of the century. This Leninist Party led to the creation and consolidation of the first socialist state in the world.

For Lenin, the starting point of the socialist revolution rests on the coming together of a revolutionary theory (Marxism) and a revolutionary working class party (the vanguard party). He defined this in these words:

> "In his struggle for power, the proletarian has no other weapon but organisation...The proletariat can, and inevitably will, become an invincible force only through its ideological unification on the principles of Marxism, being reinforced by the material unity of organisation, which welds millions of toilers into an army of the working class."

The vanguard party therefore is the dialectical unity of the working class with socialist theory.

The supreme duty of Marxist revolutionaries lies in applying and developing this theory to specific conditions of their own struggle, not mechanically, but creatively. The revolutionary concept of 'colonialism of a special type' advanced by the SACP, is an instance of the creative application and development of Marxism in concrete South African conditions. It grew out of the revolutionary experience of the South African freedom fighters over many decades. Its underlying premise is Marxism-Leninism, but it takes into account the special aspects of national oppression and class exploitation as the inseparable elements of South Africa's capitalism. It determines the Party's immediate goal — the national liberation of the most oppressed section of society, the African people, as the condition for the attainment of its strategic objective, the creation of a socialist South Africa.

B: The struggle for socialism is the supreme task of the vanguard party.

How does the consciousness of the necessity for a socialist revolution arise? For the economists or 'workerists', socialist ideology grows spontaneously out of the daily struggle of the workers against employers. Lenin's standpoint is different. "Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers only from without, that is outside of the economic struggle." The reason for this is that socialism is a scientific body of ideas. As such it has to be studied as a science. A science cannot arise spontaneously in the consciousness of the people. People have to be taught it.

This however, must not lead us to the conclusion that socialist ideas are the property of an elite. Far from it. The working class will increasingly produce from its ranks socialist theoreticians and fighters, when such ideas are implanted in the course of struggle by committed socialist revolutionaries. These revolutionaries are themselves the class conscious elements within the workers or members of the intelligentsia committed to the cause of socialism. Communist giants like Mabhida, Kotane, Vuyisile Mini are outstanding examples of revolutionary leaders who emerged from among the workers themselves.

The spontaneous struggle of the masses against oppression and exploitation cannot by itself generate revolutionary consciousness. There is every likelihood that spontaneity will fall prey to and be subverted by the ideas of the ruling class. The propagation of socialist ideas, the struggle for a socialist society is the supreme and special task of the vanguard party.

C: The Party — the highest form of organisation of the working class.

The Communist Party is the material embodiment of socialist theory. The party is not the entire working class, but part of it, its vanguard. Lenin said:

> "The economic struggle serves as a basis for the organisation of the workers into a revolutionary Party... If the economic struggle is taken as something complete in itself, there will be nothing socialist about it."

To us, the role of the proletarian vanguard is to utilise the sparks of political consciousness generated by the workers' struggle, to raise their political consciousness even higher. It lies not only in winning better terms for the sale of labour power of the workers, but to organise the workers for the destruction of the social system which gives rise to the oppression and exploitation of the working class. The independence and separate identity of the vanguard party enables it to organise and lead the working class and to transform its own ideological unity into the unity of the class.

The party is the highest form of political organisation of the working class. It is the political leader of this class without whose guiding theory and activities, it will be impossible to build socialism. In this lies the real relationship between the Party, the working class movement and the political struggle. Workerists always counterpose the working class movement with the organisation of revolutionaries. To us, the vanguard party is never a sectarian party. It does not set itself above other movements of the oppressed. As part of the oppressed and exploited, it strives for unity within the ranks of revolutionary forces.

D. Through People's Democracy to Socialism.

A persistent criticism levelled at the SACP by the ultra-left is that it has abandoned the socialist revolution in South Africa by its unconditional support of the national liberation struggle led by the ANC. Wherein does this criticism lie? Has the party broken with Marxism Leninism? Lenin approached the relationship between the socialist and national democratic revolutions by asking: "Can the class conscious worker forget the democratic struggle for the sake of the socialist struggle, or forget the latter for the sake of the former?" His reply is clear:

> "A class conscious worker... understands the relation between the two struggles. He knows that there is no road to socialism save the road through democracy."

His reply to those who argued that this was an abandonment of the socialist revolution was: "Whoever wants to reach socialism by any other path than that of political democracy, will inevitably arrive at conclusions that are absurd and reactionary." Naturally, our situation in South Africa today does not correspond exactly with that which prevailed in Russia in those days. But in all the above, Lenin is dealing with factors which are relevant to any socialist revolution.

We, the SACP, by fighting together with our comrades in the ANC to uproot national oppression, are not therefore avoiding or postponing the struggle for socialism. We are taking the only way forward. Whilst we are fighting together with the oppressed masses for national liberation, we are simultaneously organising the working people into our ranks and educating them about the fundamentals of socialism. We stand for an uninterrupted revolution from national liberation to socialism, which will only be achieved through a politically conscious and organised working class, led by our vanguard party, the SACP.

E. Proletarian Internationalism

On a world scale, capitalism ruthlessly exploits workers. For that reason, in their struggle against the bourgeoisie, the workers need international solidarity and unity. The World Communist Movement is the material embodiment of that international solidarity. It is the most influential force in the struggle of the working people throughout the world. Being an international movement, and not just a collection of individual parties, the Communists are increasingly influencing world politics. Communists are the most active, consistent and uncompromising champions of peace and security of nations, of democracy, of national and social emancipation and of socialism. The building of socialism in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries caused deep changes in the minds of the working people in capitalist countries. It defeated the bourgeois myth that workers could not run affairs in society without their bourgeois masters, and without the stimulus of capitalist profit.

The SACP is a proud and staunch member of the World Communist Movement. We stand for proletarian internationalism, without which there can be no socialist revolution. We are vigorously opposed to all efforts to undermine and deny the importance of the World Communist Movement. This Anti-Communism and Anti-Sovietism is the ideological weapon of both the imperialist bourgeoisie and of the opportunist, ultra-left petty bourgeoisie against the working class. To us, the world socialist system is the decisive force in the struggle for freedom and socialism in the world. Each liberation struggle receives indispensable aid from the world socialist system, above all from the Soviet Union. The defence of existing socialism is, therefore, the internationalist duty of every Communist.

These are our positions. Far from abandoning Marxism, the Party's position underscores it. It is the ultra-left who have abandoned Marxism, despite their revolutionary sounding phrases.

The Labour Movement and the Worker's Charter

A striking feature of the current political situation in the country is the rising militancy and political consciousness of the workers and their trade unions. The militant strike actions of the railway and SA Breweries workers are examples of how worker militancy and solidarity can force the bosses reluctantly to retreat and agree to worker demands. The giant unions, NUM and NUMSA, adopted the Freedom Charter as their political programme and declared socialism their ultimate goal. Lately FAWU, the gigantic food union, also adopted the people's charter, and now COSATU has done so.

The decisions of these workers are of great historic and strategic significance for our entire struggle for national and social emancipation. The working class of our country is beginning to take a very clear political position in the current ideological debate and battle about socialism. These decisions have once more proved the correctness of the national and class perspectives of our revolution as seen by our Party and our allies. This is happening despite the pressure and terror campaign by the racist government, despite international imperialist attempts to split and destroy COSATU and its affiliates, and despite the workerists' hostility to the Freedom Charter.

But, comrades, vigilance must still be our watchword. These forces of reaction who are bent on undermining our militancy and diverting our attention from the SACP and ANC are still working overtime to realise their counter-revolutionary aims.

At this juncture, it is important for us to put our position very clearly on the question of a worker's charter. In principle, there is nothing wrong with a worker's charter. In fact, the idea of a worker's charter is not new. SACTU pioneered the idea. A few years ago, SACTU issued and distributed a draft worker's charter for discussion in factories. SACTU hoped this would encourage discussion by workers themselves and from these discussions a complete worker's charter would emerge.

At that stage developments within the trade unions and mass democratic movement generally were not sufficiently advanced to sustain this initiative. But the idea of such a worker's charter, like the Women's Charter and the Education Charter, that draws inspiration from the Freedom Charter is still entirely valid. Such a worker's charter could deepen the political and ideological unity of the Labour movement. It could play a role in ensuring a correct balance of forces within the national democratic struggle, which will lay the basis for the most speedy and uninterrupted transition to socialism.

Our conception of a worker's charter is very different from the worker's charter that some elements and groupings have been floating recently. These same elements failed to mislead and confuse our workers with the idea of an independent worker's party based on the trade unions. Now they are feverishly trying to divert our workers' attention away from the Freedom Charter. For this, they advance an alternative charter, a worker's 'socialist' charter. In all their utterances and writings, they ignore or are openly hostile to the actual vanguard working class party in our country, the SACP. They are vague about what they mean by 'socialism'. Do they mean 'capitalism with a human face' or do they mean the scientific socialism of the Soviet Union, Cuba, Vietnam etc? No, these gentlemen's silence on these questions is very loud — fundamentally they stand opposed to scientific socialism, the SACP and socialist countries.

We call on all genuine working class militants and all democrats to adopt the following approach on the worker's charter:

★ Formal adoption of the Freedom Charter is not enough. Such adoption merely opens the way for much fuller discussion, debate and mass education about the history, meaning and relevance of the Freedom Charter. Our priority muct be to consolidate the ideological gains of the NUM, NUMSA, FAWU and COSATU adoption of the Freedom Charter. We must work to ensure the Freedom Charter is widely endorsed within the trade union movement and, of course, beyond.

★ It is out of this mass worker education that a meaningful worker's charter could emerge. While being vigilant about the motivation by certain elements (who are hostile to our struggle, our Party and our movement) for proposing a worker's charter, we do not oppose the idea in principle. A genuine worker's charter, which comes from the workers themselves, can play an important role in advancing our national and class struggle.

★ If we move towards developing such a worker's charter, it will be important to involve the widest possible number of organisations where workers are actively involved. Trade unions will undoubtedly play the main role here, but other organisations, like civics, youth and women's organisations, must participate.

Armed revolution

A free socialist South Africa will not fall from the sky. Nor will it come from mere debates. Liberation and socialism need a stubborn, death-defying class struggle. In South African conditions today, armed struggle is one of the most important forms of class struggle. This is precisely why all our class enemies, without exception, stand united against our armed struggle, yet they rely on their own army to crush our organisations. Especially they fear the development of a politically and militarily armed working class. An armed working class will be capable of leading an alliance to crush apartheid and capitalism. More than this, an armed working class will be necessary to defend worker's power after liberation.

To be successful, therefore, our armed struggle must be much more rooted within the leading class in our struggle, the workers. At this moment, the youth is playing the most important role in the armed struggle. With great dedication and vitality, the youth of MK have been able to strike telling blows on the enemy. We salute our young lions. At the same time, we know that the youth, as a broad social group, has objective and subjective limitations. Workers, on the other hand, are a more stable force. Workers are strategically placed. As a class, they have the capacity for large-scale, disciplined action. Let us take seriously the task of organising and arming the workers. *Every factory, every compound, every hostel a fortress of worker power.*

At this time, with enemy death squads wreaking havoc in the townships, our people have no choice but to defend themselves by building disciplined and clandestine defence units in our factories and in our communities.

Let us be clear — the armed struggle is not the task of MK cadres alone, nor only of the youth and the workers. *All patriots, white and black, women and men, should now come forward to join the ranks of MK.*

Security and Vigilance

The Nationalists, expert students of Hitler, now use anti-communist scare tactics to smear the UDF and COSATU as agents of Moscow. In this way, they are preparing to further harass and ban these legitimate and popular organisations. The fascist propaganda should be exposed and fought against tooth and nail.

Comrades, we say again that methods which served so well in the past are no longer good enough. While we use whatever chances there are to continue with mass work of education and organisation, we must recognise that new conditions need new methods and approaches. In our mass organisations, we must find ways to make semi-clandestine activity more effective, more efficient and more successful in reaching the masses of our people and in evading police repression. In these times, carelessness and recklessness become serious crimes against our people.

All activists and militants in our organisations must begin to develop the vigilance and skills of clandestine work. Correctly applied rules of secret work do not undermine democracy. To protect our organisations and leaders from the fascist police and their agents, here are important points to consider:

★ *Organising meetings*: Never discuss sensitive details about meetings, times and venues on the telephone, in offices that might be bugged or with people who do not need to know. Arrange details for the next meeting before you leave the previous meeting. Establish alternative arrangements for contact. Keep the size and length of meetings to the minimum. Make every meeting count — prepare thoroughly beforehand and do not waste time. We must learn to work in smaller disciplined groups while observing democracy within our organisations.

★ *Roadblocks:* Pass the word about the location of roadblocks to all comrades you meet. If you are carrying sensitive material be most vigilant and try to check the route shortly before travelling it. Plan action well in advance, especially around major dates on our political calendar. This can cut down on the amount of unnecessary travelling back and forth at times when the enemy is most active.

★ *Gossip and Rumours:* These are a major source of the enemy's information. Too many comrades like to brag about what they know. It's easy for such people to spread even things they have no proof of, like rumours. We must immediately stop anyone we catch doing these things. It is the duty of the leadership of our main democratic organisations to discipline those involved in gossip and rumour mongering and in leaking information about other people's clandestine activities.

★ *Enemy infiltration:* The organisational successes of holding GC's and AGM's show that the enemy can be outwitted. That success must not lull us — we can be sure that the enemy will redouble its efforts to infiltrate our organisations. *How do we guard against infiltration!* Quietly check on the background of new members. Are they known in the area? Have they got gaps in their life story? Be particularly careful of people coming from distant places who speak in ultra-militant and ill-disciplined ways. People with serious political and personal problems and people who always undermine the discipline of our democratic organisations may also be agents and targets to be used by enemy infiltrators. Obviously all this checking must be done carefully and with maximum discipline by a small group of trusted comrades. Wild, unfounded accusations and spook stories cause more problems and confusion and create more space for infiltration.

★ *Factionalism:* is not only politically dangerous, it is also a serious security problem. Factions produce disunity and confusion and it is during this chaos that infiltrators get to work undetected. We must always uphold democratic procedures and uproot factionalism from our organisations.

These are some of the basic security procedures that all militants in the mass democratic and trade union movements must observe. We need vigilance, but above all, we need militant vigilance.

Conclusion

Comrades, our most immediate tasks in the region are:

1. to spread the message of the SACP, especially to our working men and women and our youth, and to draw the best and most dedicated into our Party;

2. to popularise the Freedom Charter further, especially in the trade union movement, in order to lay the basis for the emergence of a militant worker's charter;
3. to ensure that all patriots, white and black and especially the workers, become combatants in our people's army Umkhonto we Sizwe; and strengthen the ranks of the ANC.

Let all freedom fighters be extremely vigilant and outwit the enemy through:

★ being politically vigilant so that our ideology is not undermined;

★ by vigilance against state repression;

★ and by developing new methods while ensuring that democratic processes in our organisations are adhered to.

LET US STRIKE THE ENEMY WHERE HE IS WEAKEST!

FORWARD TO PEOPLE'S POWER AND SOCIALISM!

AMANDLA NGAWETHU!

HOW "STAR WARS" UNDERMINES THE FIGHT FOR PEACE

by Dr. E. Reed

The birth of the capitalist system intensified the use of war as a method for the solution of various interstate problems. With the birth of the socialist system came the recognition of the possibility — indeed the necessity — of the solution of such problems without the use of force.

The biggest problem facing the capitalist countries is seen by their leaders to be the growth in numbers and in strength of the socialist countries. They see this problem not as it is, a problem of their capitalist system, but as an interstate problem. An unholy triple alliance has arisen between the manufacturers of armaments, the most reactionary apologists of the capitalist system, and those politicians who seek absolute power. This unholy alliance correctly sees the socialist countries, led by the Soviet Union, as excercising a block on their designs.

This is not new. What is new is that the world now knows that socialism is here to stay. The most that the capitalist class can hope for is to delay as much as possible the day when the socialist system replaces the capitalist system world wide. The other factor that is new is that the science of war has advanced so much that any attempt by capital to use war as a method of eliminating socialism will result in the destruction of all human society on earth, both capitalist and socialist.

There is no other way but the way of negotiation and peace between the two systems until such time as the peoples of the world — in their own way, and in their own countries, without outside interference — find their way to socialism.

Star Wars is but the latest example of the capitalist drive for war and world domination by the military industrial complex.

First steps

The manufacturers of armaments and scientific installations have been coining money from research and developments in nuclear warheads and their delivery systems. Their weapons are positioned underground in silos, under the seas in submarines, kept in the air by nuclear bombers; they can be delivered by rockets and pilotless airborn cruise missiles. The capitalists are desperate to find new regions in which they can continue to milk the people of America, their allies and the third world. They found in Edward Teller, a paranoid anti-communist scientist, and his cronies the idea of exporting the arms race into space.

For their own glorification and in total disregard of their sacred duty to mankind, they proposed a number of ideas to the President of the United States and his advisers. They then set up the framework for deluding and misleading the American public and the peoples of the world. They invented the "strategic defence initiative" to cloak a new phase of the arms race. The armaments manufacturers naturally gave avid support. Money robbed from the people of America and the rest of the world controlled by imperialism was used to seduce the weak-minded amongst the scientific community to cooperate. Jobs were offered as an inducement to the unemployed. They propagated the myth that a space-based defence umbrella could be created to protect the west against the rockets of the heathen socialists. Star Wars was born, and the money began pouring in. General Motors landed contracts worth 620 million dollars, Lockheed 524 million and TRW 367 million in the period 1983-86.

The Science and Technology

Rocket missiles are launched from a site such as a submarine, forest silo etc. The rocket rises under power to a height of some 500 kilometres where it reaches a speed of about 6-7 km/s (boost phase). It then cruises to about 900-1500 kilometres above the earth when it splits up into a number of independently targetable warheads and decoys. Before these enter the earth's atmosphere they are corrected for any errors in direction (mid-course phase) and then enter the last (terminal) phase when they enter the atmosphere and land on their targets.

The problem of defence, as seen by the proponents of SDI, is to destroy these missiles before they can deliver the warheads to their targets.

Consider the problem: (a) the launch of the missile must be detected and it must be identified as a missile; (b) a judgment must be made that the missile is targeted on the "West" and that counter measures must be taken; (c) the anti-missile apparatus must be targeted and fired.

Consider also that what is being contemplated is not defence against a single missile launched from a known position on earth, but the need to intercept perhaps hundreds of missiles fired from a multitude of places, only some of which are known. Some of the launchers are mobile, some under water, and some on aircraft.

Consider further that it requires only a small percentage of these missiles to get through the screen for the defence system to be rendered useless. A limited exchange would turn the world into a radioactive desert.

A survey of members of the American Physical Society, representing some 37,000 American scientists, has revealed that 67% of them believe it to be impossible to defend various US installations by means of the proposed SDI. 81% of the physicists said that they thought that 10% or more of the missiles would evade the SDI shield.

Let us try to assess each of these problems in turn.

Detection and identification

The detector must be in space on a space station or satellite. (This is because the missile cannot be seen beyond the horizon from a detection point on earth). The object to be detected is thousands of kilometres away. The exact place to look for it is not clearly defined. There may be other phenomenom which could be mistaken for the launch of a missile. The problem is similar to that of the photographer trying to photograph a high speed car at a distance of some miles. If he uses a telephoto lens in order to enlarge the apparent size of the car, he has great difficulty in holding the car in the field of vision. If he tries to take a picture, the camera-shake and the movement of the car make the picture blurred and out of focus. The exposure time necessary is very large and requires a very fast film which in turn means a very grainy indistinct photograph. As the largest part of the object, in our case a rocket launcher, is the torch of hot gases coming from the tail, the film must be heat sensitive. Such film (or in our case the detector)is most grainy and least sensitive.

Having detected the missile the system must be able to capture a clear enough image to identify the object as a missile. It must also track it for sufficient time to be able to direct the counter weapon on to the target.

In spite of these immense difficulties the advocates of the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) believe the best point to attack the missiles is in the 4-minute boost phase, when they are most vulnerable and most easily detected. In the second phase the warheads and decoys separate creating a multitude of targets. Some are warheads but others are only decoys; in any event they are much smaller and do not give off hot gases which are more easily detectable. This phase does however last considerably longer, about 25 minutes. The third or terminal phase is very short, less than 2 minutes.

The boost phase takes place mainly in the atmosphere where the choice of weapon is limited and cloud cover can cause problems with detection. The more the number of sites from which missiles can be launched, the greater the problem in trying to detect and destroy them.

Thus in the short space of 4 minutes, according to SDI, a war can be won or lost.

The weapons

Any weapon that is to shoot down a missile must have certain characteristics. It must be extremely fast, faster than the missile it is attacking. It must have sufficient power to penetrate the armour or casing of the missile. The launcher of the weapon must be deployed in space, though there is also the possibility of a laser being sent from earth into space where it is redirected to attack a missile). There must be sufficient energy available to launch the weapon.

Kinetic energy weapons

This type of weapon is comparable with a shell or rocket. A mass of metal (which could contain conventional or nuclear explosives) is accelerated to high velocity (10 km/s) and fired at the missile; or it has incorporated in it a self-guidance system. These weapons would use conventional powder propellants as used in shells, rocket engines and suchlike. On the other hand a newer device called a linear electromagnetic accelerator could possibly be used. This last device is like an electric motor but instead of the magnets being arranged in a circle they are laid out in a straight line. Instead of a circular rotor the driven core is a piece of metal which is not spun but sped along a linear track. These can be several hundreds of metres long.

Shells and rockets seem inappropriate for use in the boost phase. If fitted with nuclear warheads they could possibly be used in the terminal phase. They are not much favoured except perhaps for the mid-course phase. The electromagnetic accelerator type is by its nature very long and not very manouvrable. Generally these types of weapons require about the same energy per shot as the laser or beam weapons.

Lasers

A laser is in essence a very powerful packet of light energy. The initial flash of energy can be supplied by various means, for example the chemical reaction between hydrogen and fluorine (H/F), or the excitation of rare gases, or the explosion of a nuclear bomb. This initial flash of energy is then manupulated so that it becomes a single beam of energy which is very sharp and concentrated. This beam moves at the speed of light (300,000 km/s).

The energy of the beam that finally reaches the target missile depends on a number of major factors: the energy of the initial flash, the efficiency with which this flash is converted into a laser beam, the wavelength of the energy, and the medium through which it travels. The beam that finally reaches the missile must have sufficient energy to make a hole in the missile to destroy its operation.

Taking these factors into account it is calculated that each shot from a H/F laser would require an initial energy of some 200 MJ (Mega-Jules) or 2 tons of gas per shot. Another problem is that at present with each shot part of the laser weapon has to be replaced. (It is as if after each shot of a rifle the barrel had to be replaced.)

Each shot from an X-ray laser will require the explosion of a nuclear bomb in space (four times the power of the Hiroshima bomb) to supply the initial X-ray flash. The bomb is surrounded by a cylindrical array of fibres and the X-rays generated in the flash create secondary X-rays from the fibres which in turn are supposed to create another X-ray beam. This secondary beam cannot be focussed and is not particularly sharp. Such a beam would be of limited use in the boost phase since X-rays are rather powerfully absorbed by the atmosphere around the missile during the boost phase.

There is another type of laser, the excimer laser, where the initial flash is generated by a mixture of chlorine and Xenon, a rare gas. The initial energy required for such a laser flash is in the order of gigawatts per station. One gigawatt is equivalent to the rate of energy consumed if every person on earth had a 100 watt light bulb lit at the same time. Special power stations, estimated to cost $100 billion, would have to be built. The source of the laser would have to be on earth with a mirror in space to redirect the laser beam on to the missile.

I am convinced that the peoples of the earth would prefer the light bulbs to the excimer lasers.

Beam Weapons

The space of which we speak, some 1000 km above the earth, is a hard vacuum. We are familiar with neon or fluorescent tubes. These have most of the air pumped out of them, so that they contain a soft vacuum. When an electrical voltage is connected across the ends of such tubes ultra-microscopic particles (atoms, electrons, and others) pass at high speed between the ends. In space it is possible to make very long pathways down which atoms and electrons can be accelerated by electrical forces to very high speeds. The particles can reach velocities of tens of thousands of km/s. These particle beams are only effective in a vacuum and so such weapons would not be of much use in the boost phase when the missiles are mostly in the atmosphere. The SDI proponents think of using them in the mid-course phase. Their range is in any event limited to about 1000 km.

These particle beams must carry enough power to penetrate or affect the electronics of the missiles. For this the power requirements for a space station with such beam weapons are in the gigajoule range.

Energy, Speed, and Distance

The world of space and the energies we are talking about need some explanation.

The distances are in the range of 1000 km to 3000 km.

The height above the earth ranges up to 1000 km.

The speed of a very fast car is about 200 km per hour or approximately 0.06 km per second (km/s).

Missiles reach speeds of 6 km/s, kinetic energy weapons are in the range of 10 km/s, beam weapons 1,000 km/s and lasers 300,000 km/s (from Johannesburg to Cape Town in .01 seconds).

The amount of energy required to bring a two-pint kettle of water to the boil is about 400 kilojoules. It takes such a kettle with a 3 kw (kilowatt) element about 2-3 minutes to bring the water to the boil.

The initial energy required for each laser shot would be equivalent to the instant boiling of 5000 kettles or 1250 gallons of water. The laser requires its energy to be produced in about 0.1 seconds or less. In terms of chemical energy this is equivalent to about 50 kg of TNT.

Battle Space Stations

The battle stations for Star Wars must be situated in space above the earth. The weapons to be used work only in the vacuum of space, the detection of the launch of "enemy" missiles can only be done from space, and the best opportunity for attacking the missiles is from space. Such stations will be in orbit about 1000 km above the earth.

On the basis of each station having an arsenal of 1000 shots, with the necessary detection and direction finding and firing mechanisms, each must carry one or more of the following:-

weapons

1) Chemical lasers
2) Beam accelerators
3) Electromagnetic accelerators
4) Launchers for interceptor rockets
5) There are also other possible weapons.

energy supplies

1) Energy for the weapons:- 2000 tons.
2) Energy for communications sensors, computers and so on.

The energy supplies will be in a form which will require extremely specialised storage. For example if H/F lasers were to be used the chemcials would be extremely difficult to store, one being a highly volatile gas and the other one of the most corrosive substances known. If nuclear power supplies are to be used for general energy needs this would also require specialised supervision and attention.

facilities

The stations will need maintenance, repair, replacements, adjustment and replenishment from time to time. They will be highly complex and technologically advanced and as such in need of constant attention. All systems will need to have built-in redundancy with many sub-systems duplicated or even triplicated.

Early in their lives it will be found necessary to build in defences against counter measures.

Size weight

Weight- several thousand tons.

Size- several hundred metres.

All this equipment will have to be taken into space, assembled, and tested. This will require many shuttle flights into space, and this cannot be done without astronaut-construction workers and scientists.

We must take into account real-life problems. The American shuttle was billed as the most reliable, technically advanced, and safe space vehicle in operation. The history of the disaster when its solid rocket booster seal blew is well known. It was not only a question of technology. It was also a question of bad design because of the US system of awarding contracts. It was a question of poor safety checks because safety officers were overridden by the demand of the military for speed. It was a question of bad administration because all administration can only be as good as the system which it serves.

In any defence line a much larger number of pillboxes or strong points are needed than those which will be actually used to counter any attack. Since the stations in our case are earth satellites many of them will inevitably be on the other side of the earth at any one time and therefore not available for duty. There is a high redundancy rate (only one in ten battle stations will be used). Also, not every missile will be destroyed with the first shot launched against it. To destroy one target the side attempting to use SDI as a defence will have to launch a payload into space of 120 tons. The comparable weight launched by the ICBM (inter-continental ballistic missile) is only several tons. This is very important since each new missile added to the "enemy" arsenal requires a 60-fold increase in the weight of the defensive system: not to talk about the compounded increase in the defence system's complexity. Each such missile has several warheads.

The SDI system is nowhere near cost effective. Bearing in mind the lessons of history (for example, the Maginot line) one asks the question: is there any impenetrable defence? The real attack on capital comes from the poor, the dispossessed, the exploited, and the discriminated against. SDI is no defence against them.

SDI as a system

As has already been pointed out there will have to be more than one battle station to cover the many possible directions that the missiles may come from. These will have to be co-ordinated into a total system covering global space. The system will have major tasks:-

1) detection of launch and identification and tracking of missiles;
2) deciding if it is hostile and if counter measures must be taken;
3) aiming and firing the counter weapons and determining the result;
4) doing this as part of a larger system — and ALL in 4 minutes. For perhaps 1000 missiles!

Computers

The answer that is put forward by the SDI experts is that new super-computers will be able to handle the problem that will arise. These can be centralised in one place with lines of communication to the battle stations, or decentralised with each battle station being fully equipped and independent, or some mix of the two systems. Lines of communication are vulnerable to message corruption and attack. A centralised system is not favoured because it would make itself a prime target. A totally decentralised system becomes unstable and leaves decision making in too many hands.

In any system computers will have to play the supreme role since time is of the essence. The computer system will have to operate from data received from sensors, relays, and servomechanisms. It will have to process the data and decide on action which will in turn operate machinery, power systems, and suchlike. The system outlined involves several interlinked super-computers, with a mass of smaller computers and electronic devices.

Calculations have been done on the programming required for SDI taking into account the monitoring system alone. This starts from the fundamentals of first registering the image of the "missile", converting it into digital form for computer processing, identifying that it is a missile, and tracking it for less than 2 minutes. Soviet scientists have estimated that the computer programme would be about 1,000,000 characters long and would require 250,000 hours to write. It would initially have about 300 errors and it would take longer to correct these than to write the original programme. Further calculations show that 30 detector and monitoring stations is the maximum number that a computer program can in practice be written for (it would contain 10,000,000,000 characters. This is about the size of a library of 10,000 books and it must contain no typographical errors or printer's gremlins.) A practical monitoring system would require many more monitoring stations.

Monitoring is only the beginning of the list of tasks the computer system would have to undertake. Much more important tasks have to be tackled which will need so-called "expert" systems which are yet to be developed and fully proved. Computers with artificial intelligence are mooted. However any concievable "brain" must have the ability of self-education. Such education can only take place on the basis of "ideas, concepts" being accepted or rejected. Any such discrimination can only be exercise on the basis of need, as is done with biological systems. Their need is the need to survive. Any artificial intelligences will likewise have to make such decisions, and will have their need programmed into them by their programmers. They will be programmed by the Pentagon. From the history of the Pentagon is it clear what needs will be programmed into the artificial intelligence of an SDI computer.

Such systems will be given the job of deciding to start the destruction of life on earth by means of a nuclear war. They will constitute the final demise of democracy. In the past wars have often been started by unelected fanatics; now it will be possible that a war could be started by a non-human machine.

Any such possibility must be eliminated, not given to some inanimate computer programmed by the paranoid.

With the well-tried simpler computer systems already in operation with the Pentagon, a flock of ducks has been mistaken for Soviet missiles and a nuclear war avoided by a hair's breadth. The decision of the computers was overridden by human operatives. The SDI computer system does not allow for such human intervention — only 4 minutes are available. The philosophy of the system is that, because there is only 4 minutes available, human beings cannot be consulted.

Counter-measures

Even before the SDI system has become more than an experiment here on earth, history has moved on. X-ray lasers are being developed, but are now thought to be of greater possible use against battle stations than against missiles. The electromagnetic linear accelerators seem to be a better weapon against tanks than ICBM'S. The space shuttle has been grounded.

But the possibilities of counter-measures have also been mooted.

Missiles can have their boost phase cut down to 1 minute. The exhaust-gas torch can be distorted by the addition of chemicals to the propellants, thus confusing the sensors. The missiles can be covered with various coatings which make them far less prone to attack by lasers, thus rendering the present underpowered lasers even less effective. Various decoys can be released, such as for example metal coated balloons, hundreds for each genuine warhead. Smoke and metal chaff (already used to confuse radar) can be released to absorb the energy of the lasers. Missiles can be submarine-launched close to the coast in low trajectory. Missiles which remain in the atmosphere throughout their flight cannot be destroyed by Star War weapons. Electrical interference methods already exist to confuse communications between the battle computers. The battle stations themselves are particularly vulnerable to space mines, rockets and the very space weapons being devised by SDI scientists. They are in fact much easier targets since they are in well defined orbits and easily tracked.

Testing

Individual items and weapons can be tested. It is possible that sub-systems could be tested without starting a nuclear war provided the Soviet Union is kept aware that it is only a test and not an attack. But it is not possible to test the whole system except in response to an attack such as is envisaged by Star Wars. British arms manufacturers used the Falklands War as a test bed for new weapons systems they had developed. Not all such systems were a success and many were later modified in the light of actual battlefield experience. For SDI there will only be one battle, the world's last. There will be no scope for midifications in the light of such experience. There will be no chance to find out if counter-measures were or were not successful.

Dialectics teaches us that for every offensive system devised by man a defence can also be devised by man, and vice versa. If mankind still exists.

The truth of SDI

SDI is an escalation of the arms race. In the history of warfare new defensive systems have never been used to defend the civilian population but to defend the military. SDI is no exception. It has nothing to do with defence or making the world more secure. It is an attempt to intimidate and attack the Soviet Union and its allies.

SDI cannot however simply be dismissed as a useless exercise. It is positively dangerous. It is extremely costly in human resources. The total debt of the third world could be wiped out if the funds wasted on useless space hardware were devoted to welfare.

Security lies in de-escalation, in talks, in reinforcing the peace movement, in the elimination of discrimination and racism, in the abolition of poverty.

The SACP, SACTU and the ANC have always been staunch supporters of the peace movement for there can be no implementation of the Freedom Charter if South Africa is reduced with the rest of the world to a radioactive Karoo.

The time is overripe for an anti-nuclear peace movement to be developed in our country. There are already stirrings. The realisation is growing that in any nuclear war all the people of South Africa will be charred black irrespective of race, colour or creed. Our history and the history of racist regimes in Germany, America and elsewhere have proved that the fight against racism is in practice a fight against the dogs of war.

It is no accident that the Freedom Charter proclaims that the new "South Africa shall strive to maintain world peace and the settlement of all international disputes by negotiation — not war."

OUTER SPACE AS A ZONE OF PEACE

AFRICA
NOTES & COMMENT

By Ahmed Azad

TUNISIA: NINTH CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Tunisian Communist Party was formed in 1938. Over the years the Party gradually built up its influence amongst the more advanced and politically conscious working people and intellectuals. It played an important role in the struggle against French colonialism, and was a firm and consistent supporter of the armed revolutionary struggle waged by the FLN in Algeria. At its sixth Congress in 1962 the Party was confident of becoming a powerful force in the political life of Tunisia and the Middle East. But these hopes could not materialise as it was banned in 1963. Habib Bourguiba — until recently head of state — allowed only one party to operate legally and openly: his own Socialist Destourian Party (PDS).

Although banned the Communist Party refused to lie down. For eighteen years, working under the difficult and complex conditions of illegality, the communists kept alive the ideas of Marxism-Leninism in Tunisia. They persistently fought for the unity of all those opposed to the anti-democratic measures of the government. The struggle of these progressive forces for democratic rights made considerable headway in the seventies. Bourguiba was forced to concede. Opposition forces of the left and the right asserted their right to function as legal political organisations. After July 1981 the TCP started operating in a semi-clandestine manner and at present it is a recognised, legal opposition force.

The ninth congress of the TCP held last year (1987) was the first legal congress of the party since 1962. Over 140 delegates and many foreign guests, including some from the socialist countries, were present.

In his report to Congress Mohammed Harmel, General Secretary of the TCP, made a detailed analysis and critique of the internal situation and also dealt with international questions. Dealing with the role of the Party, Harmel said "We have sought to promote the party's positive ideological, political and militant traditions through much discussion, hard work, criticism and self-criticism and a quest for collective policy-making." But he also pointed out that they were not satisfied with "the work and advances made in building a united revolutionary party influencing all areas of public life."[1]

The report is very critical of the government's suppression of civil rights following the fraudulent elections of 1984 which gave the PDS an overwhelming victory. The trade union movement has been a principal target for these attacks and the Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI) has also suffered.

Within Tunisia there is a debate going on about whether or not the MTI is a Muslim fundamentalist organisation similar to the one in Iran. The MTI projects a moderate image and has had relations with the TCP and prominent personalities such as Ahmed Mestiri, a former Cabinet Minister. The latter maintains that there are profound theological and ideological differences between the Shiite Muslims of Iran and the Sunni Muslims of Tunisia, and that the MTI's leader, Rashid al Ghannouchi, is prepared to tolerate other beliefs. In his report Harmel condemned the attacks on the MTI, called for an end to the wave of repression engulfing the country and emphasised that violence would only intensify the problem. He pointed out that the rise of the MTI and other religious political currents can be traced to "several reasons, among them the socio-economic crisis and its impact on young people looking to religion for supreme values."

The TCP has had candid and positive meetings with the MTI in which they found common ground within the framework of general opposition to the regime. However the TCP is aware of the "appreciable ideological and political differences separating" the two sides, and the dangers which may arise from religious meddling in politics. For the communists the "provision of civic freedoms is essential for a free contention of ideas, to give every social current the place it deserves. This is the best way to guard the country against the perils of the religious or any other manifestations of fanaticism."

At the time of writing at least 1,500 people, including Ghannouchi, were under arrest. In August 1987, terrorist attacks were made on popular tourist hotels. The MTI disclaimed any responsibility for those attacks. From among the many people arrested the government put on show on television a few detainees who claimed to be members of the MTI. Some prisoners claim that interrogators burned their hair and poured urine into their mouths. Nevertheless these attacks on the MTI have not deterred young Muslims from organising protest demonstrations. In the last quarter of last year two members of the MTI were hanged and other leaders and activists were given heavy prison sentences for the August bomb outrages.

Acute Crisis

Tunisia, like the rest of the developing world, is facing an acute economic crisis. Many small craftsmen and traders have been ruined. Unemployment is between 15 and 25 per cent, with teachers, engineers and pharmacologists amongst those seeking work. The government's solution seems to be dictated by a further deregulation of the economy. This is presumably intended to open the doors for less control on prices, imports and exports and on labour regulations. The TCP rejects the view that "the crisis and hardships grow out of the state sector and government interference in the economy and that the cure-all is the private sector and profit and market laws.

> "Whilst fighting for a radical shift from the policies of the government the communists believe that even before such a shift takes place it is possible to take steps to check the tide, salvage the productive machinery, halt the rising unemployment, pre-empt the further depreciation of the purchasing power of wage-earners, stimulate the home market, and improve things in education, transport and health care. One of such emergency measures should be the rescheduling of our debt-repayment."

The Ninth Congress of the TCP dealt with a number of theoretical issues regarding the nature and character of contemporary revolutions and the form and content of the state. After saying that the question of democracy and the state was underestimated in the concept of the non-capitalist path of development, comrade Harmel writes:

> "In our view, no country can be called progressive if it blocks democracy, no country can be simultaneously undemocratic and progressive. Practice has corroborated this view virtually everywhere...
>
> "We therefore believe that the revolution must be a really popular revolution, i.e., one born of the people's demands and carried out with the participation of the mass of the people. A putsch, even a most progressive one, is not our strategy. There are situations, of course, in which, a progressive minority can take power, but the merits of such a changeover seem problematic."[2]

In dealing with the international situation comrade Harmel pays special attention to developments within the Arab national liberation movement and the aggressive policies of US imperialism. The TCP deplores the estranged relations between Tunisia and Libya and demands a policy of peaceful co-existence and good neighbourliness. It fully supports the struggle of the Palestinians for self-determination and an independent state. It welcomes the peace proposals of the Soviet Union and expresses solidarity with all national liberation movements fighting against apartheid, and for political and economic independence.

The delegates approved the report, adopted a new party charter which is consistent with the party's present legality, and adopted resolutions dealing with party organisation and the need for a broad democratic front as well as on various international questions. A new central committee was elected with comrade Mohammed Harmel as General Secretary.

NOTES

(1) Excerpts from the report of Mohammed Harmel were printed in the Information Bulletin, Prague, No.18 vol. 25, 1987.

(2) *World Marxist Review*, Number 9, September 1987, p.34.

THE COMMON FUND FOR COMMODITIES

At its last conference the Non-Aligned Movement called for the immediate implementation of the Common Fund for Commodities agreement which was negotiated in 1980. The agreement has two accords. The first one involves some 470 million US dollars which if raised could be used to help stabilise prices on the world commodity markets. The second involving some 250 million US dollars is designed to finance development and research projects.

The economies of the developing countries, in particular in Africa, are suffering considerably owing to the volatile and unstable position of primary products on the world market. This world market is controlled by the imperialist countries and their transnationals.

In addition to the problems caused by fluctuations and instability, the prices received by the developing countries for their raw materials are continually falling in relation to the prices paid for finished goods imported from the advanced capitalist countries. It is thus in the interests of the developing countries to have a stable and reliable market for their products. But the agreement could also be useful to the developed economies since sharp fluctuations caused by surpluses or shortages of raw material commodities on the world market can destabilise world economic relations and trade.

The USA, which signed the agreement in 1980, is now reneging on its undertakings. At that time the Soviet Union was suspicious that the agreement would be utilised not to help the needy but to bolster the profit margins of the imperialist monopolies. However following the last Non-Aligned Conference, Robert Mugabe, in his capacity as chairman of the movement, called on all countries to ratify the agreement. The Soviet Union responded positively to this appeal. It has agreed to deposit 5.8 per cent of the authorised capital into the first account. This move has given UNCTAD (United Nations Centre for Trade and Development) efforts a great boost.

In a communication to chairman Mugabe, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov said that international economic security can be attained if all the countries pool their efforts to ensure "stable, dependable, predictable and equitable conditions for development." In explaining why the Soviet Union has acceded to the agreement Gorbachov said:

> "Our country proceeds from the premise that effective implementation of the agreement for the common fund would promote mutually beneficial international commerce and become a practical contribution to the establishment of a democratic and stable system of commerce that would ensure the economic security of all states. The main road to the solution of the entire complex of problems burdening the world economic relations — the USSR and the non-aligned movement are unanimous on that — is opened up by disarmament and the devotion of the huge resources released in the process to the needs of construction, development and cooperation."

Now that the Soviet Union is a party to the agreement UNCTAD officials hope that this will galvanise support from other countries.

THE AOUZOU STRIP: HABRE UPS THE STAKES

In "Africa Notes", Third Quarter, 1987, it was pointed out that sovereignty over the Aouzou strip — which is in Libya's hands — is likely to lead to further conflicts between Chad and Libya.

On 8th August, 1987, Chadian government troops captured the town of Aouzou, administrative centre of the Aouzou strip. This move exacerbated the tension with Libya and increased the likelihood of a war between the two sides. It is widely believed that this unnecessary escalation of conflict was promoted by US imperialism. Washington is using the Chad-Libya dispute to further its campaign to overthrow Colonel Gaddafi. Not surprisingly, on August 11 the US State Department backed Chad's claim to sovereignty over the area. Later it pledged continued US support to Chad in the latter's attempts to wrest control of the Aouzou strip "from Libyan occupation." Only a few months earlier Hissene Habre paid an official visit to Washington where he was warmly received. Given the present cosy relations between Reagan and Habre we can be sure that the dispute over the Aouzou strip featured prominently in the discussions. The Reagan administration has asked Congress for 21 million dollars for Chad. Out of this amount at least 9 million dollars is earmarked for military purposes. This is outrageous when one considers that Chad is one of the poorest countries in the world. Furthermore, so-called supplementary funds are to be made available to Habre to "fend off future Libyan encroachments."

After the capture of Aouzou the Chadian government let loose a torrent of propaganda accusing Libya of "incessant rocket and bombing attacks" and of using napalm. This propaganda hype was designed to foster anti-Libyan attitudes, particularly in Africa, and to force the hands of the French government. France still has about 3,000 troops in Chad. Officially the French are refusing to go beyond the 16th parallel. Habre wanted France to offer air support and related defence cover. US imperialism also put pressure on France to back Chad's military campaign. But France is afraid that overt backing for the Chadian adventure could jeopardise its extensive interests in Africa and the Middle East. Thus it refused. Without the military backing of France Chad's hold on Aouzou was precarious.

This was clearly demonstrated when Libya re-captured the town on August 29th. The Chadian troups were routed and compelled to make a hasty retreat to the air-base in Bardai which contains French military personnel. The quick defeat also exposed Habre's boast that the Chadian soldiers would fight "to the last drop of blood."

Peace Attempts

Just prior to the Libyan attack a number of African countries, including Nigeria, engaged in diplomatic initiatives to reduce tension and find a solution to the conflict. President Kaunda, current chairman of the OAU, also undertook a peace-seeking mission during which he met Hissene Habre, Gaddafi, President Bongo of Gabon (who is chairman of the OAU ad hoc committee on Chad) and President Sassou-Nguesso of Congo Brazzaville (the former chairman of the OAU). However the events of August 29 overtook this mission.

The OAU ad hoc committee, composed of Zambia, Gabon, Senegal, Cameroon and Mozambique, met in Lusaka at the end of September 1987.

They requested both sides to submit documents supporting their claim to the disputed territory by the end of October 1987. At the time of writing Libya had announced that it had submitted the relevant documents substantiating its position. The ad hoc committee also intends to host a meeting of cartographers and other experts in Gabon to examine the issue. Both sides were requested to observe the ceasefire, to refrain from acts such as flights over each other's air space, incursions, concentration of troops, import of foreign arms, recruitment of foreign troops and internationalisation of the conflict. A suggestion from Nigeria that an African peace-keeping force be sent to separate the two sides was not adopted. It was felt that the time for such action was not opportune.

Following the recapture of Aouzou Libya issued a statement saying that in their opinion the war between the two sides has ended. However sparks are bound to fly if Walid Jumblatt, leader of Lebanon's Progressive Socialist Party, pursues his idea of sending 1,000 of his troops to Libya. Already the Chad government has denounced this idea, charging that Libya was importing mercenaries. Libya on the other hand is adamant that this indicates the readiness of Lebanese volunteers "to stand alongside their Libyan brothers in confronting imperialist threats."

Despite the pleas of the ad hoc committee, the media in Ndjamena continue their vitriolic attacks on Libya. They accuse Libya of seeking to annex Chad and of violating the ceasefire agreement. Ndjamena radio took this war propaganda to absurd levels when it accused Algeria of supporting the "Arab crusade against Black African states", and of being "partisan and racist politicians." (*West Africa*, 1987, p.1992)

U.S. Imperialism

Like the fratricidal Iran-Iraq war, this conflict only serves the interests of the forces of reaction and imperialism. As long as Chad is supposed to be in conflict with Libya, France claims legitimacy for its troops in that country. At the same time it strengthens the French neo-colonialist presence in the region. US imperialism still seems determined to overthrow Gaddafi and integrate Libya into its strategic ambit. That this may involve the loss of Chadian lives and halt Chadian development does not deter them. Moreover, the continuation of the conflict provides Washington with a convenient excuse to boost its military presence in the region. Given that it already has bases in Zaire the growing US military build-up in Chad poses a serious threat to peace and to the independence of the countries in the region.

A number of African countries are deeply concerned at this military build-up. Already Nigeria has warned France that its continued military involvement in Chad could affect relations between the two countries. Bolaji Akinyami, Nigeria's Foreign Minister, has called on France to co-operate with Nigeria and the OAU in finding a peaceful solution. There is no doubt that a negotiated solution of the Chad-Libya conflict is in the best interest of both peoples and of all Africa.

It should also be noted that the internal disputes in Chad have not yet been resolved. It seems there is still fighting going on in the Tibesti mountains in Chad, and Goukhouni Weddeye, a prominent political figure in Chad, has stated that Habre is not making it possible for him and his forces to return to the country. Quite clearly the solution to this on-going problem of national reconciliation is a key question if Chad is not to continue to be the scene of political upheavals.

KENYA: UNITY OF KENYAN ORGANISATIONS ABROAD

October 20 is Mau Mau Freedom Fighters' Day. On this day 35 years ago the Kenya Land and Freedom Army led by Field Marshal Kimathi Wa Waciuri began the armed struggle against British colonial enslavement. It is therefore most appropriate that the formation of Umoja Wa Kupigania Democrasia Kenya (United Movement for Democracy in Kenya) was announced at a public meeting in London on October 20, 1987. Umoja was formed by Muungano wa Demokrasia Kenya (MDK), USA; Ukenya, Britain; Kenya Democratic Alliance (KDA), Norway; Committee for Democracy in Kenya (CDK), Sweden; Kamati ya Ukombozi Kenya (Kaukenya) and Patriotic Alliance of Kenyans (Pake), Africa.

The meeting which launched Umoja was dominated by revolutionary songs and poems. The highlight of the evening was the political statement read by Ngugi wa Thiongo, one of Africa's outstanding creative writers. For a number of years Ngugi has been in the forefront of the battle for democracy in Kenya and for the unity of the opposition groups working abroad.

The statement points out that the unity conference was held in London from October 16 to 19, 1987. According to Umoja the present situation in Kenya is characterised by jailings, detention without trial, torture, disappearances, deaths in police custody and massacres. At the same time they "note with pride the increasing international and national isolation of the regime". At their conference the delegates examined the weaknesses and difficulties experienced by the various organisations in their work. Some of the weaknesses highlighted were lack of communication between the different groups, lack of discipline, factionalism, 'anarchic tendencies' and isolation from the struggle in Kenya. In order to overcome these weaknesses and take their work to higher levels Umoja formed a central secretariat with branches in different parts of the world wherever it is appropriate.

The statement adds: "Umoja, which now brings together the resistance abroad under one umbrella, is an anti-imperialist organisation wholly committed to the restoration of our national sovereignty, the building of a truly democratic Kenya and the restructuring of the economy for the social progress of the Kenyan people. Umoja is not a new party but a support movement for the struggle at home." Umoja, which is inspired by the underground resistance movement Mwakenya, declared its "total support for Mwakenya and its political demands as set out in its draft minimum programme." In the statement the delegates denounced the presence of US military bases in Kenya as well as a recently concluded drug agreement between Kenya and US imperialism. In terms of the agreement the US is given permission to conduct research on biological weapons under the cover of veterinary research. Umoja is horrified that these biological methods are being tested on Kenyan people and not on animals as is the case in the USA.

The conference and the launching meeting were inspired by a message of greetings from Mwakenya. This organisation fully supports the action for unity in order to "establish a truly free and genuinely independent Kenya." The message concludes by "urging all patriotic, democratic and progressive organisations and individual comrades abroad to unite into a single force to support the on-going struggle at home."

PEOPLE'S EDUCATION FOR PEOPLE'S POWER

By T.B. Fulani

The effects of segregated education manifest themselves in all facets of life of the South African society — at work, socially and culturally. A poor quality of education naturally produces a poor product, thus making it difficult for the recipients to compete with their counterparts within and outside South Africa. It is for this reason that, since 1976, there has never been peace in South African Black schools.

Many of those who, during this period, rejected Bantu education were able to find employment only as unskilled or semi-skilled labourers. Some joined the ranks of the unemployed whilst others left the country to join the African National Congress (ANC) and swelled the ranks of the people's army — Umkhonto We Sizwe. All these different detachments had to learn a new way of life in the areas in which they found themselves.

One of the most important things the youth and students had to learn was that education, other than Bantu education, could play a significant role in shaping the future of our society, to create new men and women capable of building and shaping their own destiny. They also had to realise that the education struggle was a core component of the broader struggle for political and economic emancipation. It was this understanding which gave rise to the students/parents/teachers committees throughout the country.

Out of this interaction among the different groups in our society was conceived the notion of people's education. The declaration of the state of emergency in 1985 precipitated the formation of a number of grassroots organs of people's power, one of which was the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC). These rudimentary organs of people's power added momentum to the on-going struggle for alternative education and a total rejection of the inferior system of education.

Not only did they reject Bantu education; they also refused to accept any form of education which seeks to justify inequalities, not only between different national groups, but also among different classes and strata in the society. In rejecting racist education the NECC declared:

> "We are not prepared to accept any alternative to Bantu education which is imposed from above . . . another type of alternative school we reject is one which gives students from more wealthy backgrounds avenues to opt out of the struggle, such as commercially run schools which are springing up."[1]

Also significant is the fact that the youth and students through the NECC agreed to shift from the slogan LIBERATION NOW, EDUCATION LATER and adopted a new slogan PEOPLE'S EDUCATION FOR PEOPLE'S POWER.

This new slogan further cemented the relationship between the youth and students, on the one hand, and the entire democratic movement on the other. It was reminiscent of the slogan FROM UNGOVERNABILITY TO PEOPLE'S POWER, which charged the people to take over the crumbling apartheid structures and demonstrate how a future South Africa should be run.

This development has attracted the attention of a variety of groupings within and beyond the borders of our country with diverse political and ideological persuasions.

This article seeks to examine the class character of people's education in the context of the national democratic revolution in South Africa. It will also look at the possible ways in which the dominant classes can use education to achieve their own ends. In so doing it will examine the available resources, the infrastructure and the power behind them. A closer look will also be taken at the ways and means available to achieve the gigantic task of closing the gap betwen mental and manual labour.

A Vital Component

The demand for a universal system of education for South Africans of all population groups, respect for one another's culture and language and for equitable distribution of the country's resources, has been a stimulus for struggle in South Africa for decades. When Bantu education was first introduced, the ANC considered the Bantu Education Act the most dangerous of the oppressive laws, and Chief Albert Lutuli, the President of the ANC, at its annual conference in December 1954 called on African parents to withdraw their children from Bantu education schools, not just temporarily but permanently. It is in the context of these on-going battles that people's education should be considered as a continuing process and a crystallisation of the struggles of many decades.

What is happening today is a progressive development arising from a number of battles which have been waged at different times during the course of struggle for the transformation of the society as a whole. For example, in 1977 a group of students who either were expelled from or dropped out of university, together with a group of youth who had already completed high school and were employed in industry, plus all high school students in Port Elizabeth, formed the Association for Science and Technology (AFSAT). This body was set up with the aim of redressing the effects of the serious problem of ill-equipped laboratories in the Black schools. The youth and students were active participants in the attempts to structure what were considered relevant and appropriate methods of teaching and the modification of the curricula. Although this move did not gain much ground due to the regime's repressive measures, AFSAT had gone as far as organising seminars on topics such as: The effects of pollution on the community, social problems caused by the migrant labour system and the effects of this on the youth.

Professional people in the community were also drawn in to contribute their expertise. Equipment and funding were collected from the community through fund-raising campaigns and certain industries were asked for contributions. This is one example among many just to illustrate the point that where there is a will there is a way.

Programmes organised, implemented and evaluated through a united body of people enable the community to develop an ideological perception of their own struggle. This understanding and collectivism are necessary to advance the struggle. As the Nicaraguan Vice-Minister of Adult Education once stated:

> "No single programme of the revolution can be understood without understanding the revolution integrally."... [2]

Therefore people's education in South Africa should be seen as an integral process in an unfolding struggle. It has and will continue to take different forms as the struggle begins to take a definite shape, and as the students, the youth, teachers and all the participants become conscious of their historical role in the struggle.

The position adopted by the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO), the NECC and the Congress of South African Trade Unions, that education must be placed at the service of the people, constitutes a long-term investment. The youth are involved in the education programme of the workers because they have members who belong to the trade union movement. This exposes them to the day-to-day problems faced by their parents, brothers and sisters at the work place and also teaches them to understand the relationship between mental and manual labour. As the Cuban Minister of Education stated in 1959:

> "Without preferential attention to the people's education we could not expect the revolutionary purpose to be fulfilled".

This also demonstrates that education is a two-way process. However, academic expertise is not a prerequisite for political and ideological understanding of the revolution. For a revolution to succeed it has to have a programme of action to guard against distortions and diversions. A nation without an ideologically prepared youth is a nation without a future.

Radicalism without realisable objectives and realistic analysis of the enemy's strength and weaknesses can be a recipe for anarchy. There is sometimes the temptation among the youth and students to equate militancy with revolutionary commitment. Anarcho-syndicalist deviations can only be detected by ideologically developed revolutionaries.

People's Education

In 1986, the NECC after consultation with a cross-section of our people, the entire democratic movement, including the ANC, launched a vigorous campaign for all students to return to school. This was no capitulation, nor was it a sign of weakness on the part of the returning students. Rather it showed a deeper understanding of the correct strategy and tactics of the liberation movement and the likely consequences of the boycott now and in the future. Would it strengthen or weaken our position?

The boycott campaign, as President O.R. Tambo stated, perhaps in a different context, was "aimed at the total isolation of apartheid South Africa" and not our people. Similarly, the education struggle had to be directed against the regime. Hence the notion of converting the apartheid education structures into people's schools and making it the responsibility of the state to finance those schools.

However, the students had won important battles during the three-year education boycott, such as the supply of free textbooks, the abolition of school fees and the recognition of Students' Representative Councils (SRCs). But bigger battles still remain to be won — the release of all detained students, of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners, the unbanning of the ANC, the lifting of the state of emergency and the abolition of Bantu Education in its entirety.

Some of these demands were reformulated with the aim of advancing our struggle. The strategy was to fight the battle on the enemy's territory, to demand that people's education be taught in the existing buildings, to reorientate teachers to teach subjects like history so as to make pupils and students understand the evils of apartheid. This new strategy gave rise to the campaign for people's education and the Education Charter. The regime, through its repressive measures and disinformation campaigns, is trying to thwart or marginalise the people's efforts — but without success.

People's Education is a broad concept which can be twisted to suit the interests of whoever is in control. As one writer has put it:

> "By educational process is meant a system by which the content of instruction or education in any form whatsoever is transferred from source of 'emission' to a 'reception point', that is, from a teacher to a student . . ."[3]

It is important to ensure that the content of education reflects the ideas on which our struggle is structured. In its broadest sense, therefore, education (which covers schooling), information transmitted (though radio, television and the press) to the public, and cultural values may reflect those of the dominant class, which may not necessarily be a reflection of what a democratic society should be.

Naturally under a racially divided capitalist system, the mass media, which are controlled by big business and the state, transmit the type of information they deem appropriate for the public. Such distorted information and cultural values can distort the very fabric upon which people's education is founded, because it has to protect the interests of the bourgeoisie.

The proliferation of the number of privately run schools may run the risk of encouraging students to opt out of Bantu Education while not escaping the inculcation of bourgeois values because only the children of privileged families will have access to this type of education. Given a chance, the regime would be only too happy to encourage the establishment of more private schools as this would bail it out of the education crisis. If this were to happen the rate of illiteracy would rise, the existing schools would degenerate. The regime would have an excuse not to increase the supply of educational facilities to meet the demand and above all their education would become even more distorted and expensive because school fees would rise faster than the rate of income.

Many who still wish to continue with their studies but are unable to make it because of financial constraints and political pressure will leave the country — some, where they are properly advised, to join the liberation movement, others on British, American or West German scholarships to study abroad.

A caution is necessary to the contingent of students who find themselves with overseas scholarships at their disposal. We need to bear in mind the objectives of the governments who offer these scholarships. They are diametrically opposed not only to our programme for people's education but also to the entire agenda for liberation. If anything they are working to divert the people's struggle.

The following recommendations of the United States of America (USA) Congressional Subcommitte on Africa for funding South African educational projects, after its visit to SA a couple of years ago, are clear evidence of their insidious designs:

- "It would help a relatively peaceful transition towards racial justice which would be consistent with American interest.
- It would help sustain commercial relations totalling 3.4 billion dollars a year and USA direct investment of over 2 billion dollars a year.
- It could gain America a measure of credibility with Black South Africans and it could be useful in avoiding damaging diplomatic collision with important nations of the Third World over the issue of international sanctions against South Africa.
- It could frustrate the growth of the Soviet influence".[4]

Surely the idea of people's education based on the rejection of racist education is not to create a class which will reduce the pace of our liberation struggle. If anything, the momentum needs to be accelerated. Secondly, our struggle is not against the Soviet Union; on the contrary, it is against the racist minority regime and all those who prop it up. The US is South Africa's main trading partner and Reagan is Botha's firmest supporter. The commercial relations the US is striving to sustain are the very ones which keep the black majority in SA in a state of perpetual subjection.

It would, however, be wrong to assume that all those who receive these scholarships necessarily accept the conditions of the donors. It is therefore incumbent upon the entire liberation movement to ensure that the ideals of people's education are not forgotten by all South Africans, wherever they may be. Thanks to the foresight of the ANC in building the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO), we now have advanced cadres who are armed with revolutionary theory and the ideological perceptions of the people's struggle.

There can be no normal education in an abnormal society. Any education based on bourgeois norms encourages people to believe in and defend the iniquities of the system. It was in recognition of these pitfalls that the youth and students deliberately placed the education struggle within the ambit of the national democratic struggle for freedom.

While some of the problems catalogued above will be sorted out as the struggle develops, nothing should be left to chance. The gains of the ongoing education struggle can best be explained in the words of the Rev. Molefe Tsele of the NECC when he said:

"The student leaders are being schooled in a way that no other system could teach them. They will enter the market conversant with trade unionism, fearless and sure of their power". It is this kind of education that a people's Education Charter should reflect and defend.

Worker's Education, as stated above, is a component part of People's Education. The centrality of the role of the working class in the national democratic revolution makes worker's education occupy a central role in the programme for people's education. A large majority of workers in South Africa, particularly Black workers, do not participate in the decision-making process that affects their lives — politically, economically, culturally, and socially.

The rural poor, the labourers and the farmworkers are taught to accept the status quo as natural and normal. The entire apartheid education system is designed to satisfy the labour needs of the ruling class whilst at the same time making the workers believe that they have a say in their running of their own affairs.

Importance of Theory

Without a sound revolutionary working class theory the workers can become victims of two main opposing trends: the myopic ultra-leftist workerist tendencies which seek to divorce the struggle against national oppression from the struggle for socialism, on the one hand, and the contradictions of the capitalist system on the other. Whilst the workerists are busy telling workers not to 'submerge' the trade union struggle in the mass democratic struggle ('populist' organisations), the bourgeoisie is calling on them to join 'popular capitalism' as the only way forward. The extreme left is, wittingly or unwittingly, weakening the very left whilst the ruling class is striving to consolidate its position by blurring the irreconcilable contradictions between the warring classes.

It is this gap that should be closed by providing relevant education to the workers, such as adult literacy classes and political education, to teach them about the inequities of the capitalist system and the injustices inherent in it. A worker's programme should include education on how to move from the present stage to a higher level of development, where their cultural heritage, human values and progressive traditional norms shall be developed and respected; where there shall be no exploitation of man by man. They should be taught how to build a dynamic and equitable system of production, participation and distribution.

The workers should have confidence in themselves, for the entire economy is in their hands. Without their hard acquired skills, the capitalist economy would crumble. Therefore, the skills the workers have, no matter how elementary, can be developed as part of the programme for people's education. Some of them have an enormous wealth of knowledge that can qualify them as teachers or tutors, even without certificates.

Some workers feel that education and knowledge are privileges of the dominant social classes, and the bourgeoisie would like to them to believe that this situation is natural and irreversible. It is through the liberation movement that the workers can become conscious of the possibility and the need to defend their interests against the ruling classes, who wish to keep knowledge as their exclusive preserve.

Revolutionary worker's education should, as Lenin taught us, combine "a unity of political, ideological, theoretical (ie scientifically founded) and organisational work". It should make the workers conscious of their historical responsibility to rid our country of the scourge of apartheid and capitalist inspired division.

It becomes imperative, therefore, that the workers both as parents and through their trade unions should have an input in the shaping of the Education Charter, to make it reflect what education should be in a democratic South Africa. The content of the Charter should not deviate, either in letter or in spirit, from the revolutionary goals of our movement. Economically and ideologically the Charter has to mirror the working-class culture. But this can only be guaranteed if the working-class organisations are actively involved in all the campaigns for the democratisation of our society. A people's education must chart the way forward and agitate for the betterment of the lives of the rest of the toiling masses.

The current political situation in South Africa was succinctly described by the former General Secretary of the South African Communist Party, Moses Mabhida, in 1985 when he said:

> "Today, the South African revolution stands at a momentous threshold — the Pretoria regime is no longer strong enough to defeat the revolution; the revolution is not yet strong enough to defeat Pretoria. The people have seized the initiative, using every form of struggle to challenge apartheid tyranny."[6]

The final onslaught against the apartheid tyranny and all its repressive institutions will require unity between the youth and students, the trade unions and the entire liberation movement. The need to guard against imperialist manoeuvres cannot be over-emphasised. Never before has our unity been so vital and the enemy's force in such disarray.

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SAM KAHN — SOUTH AFRICA'S FIRST COMMUNIST M.P.

Sam Kahn, the first Communist Party member to be elected to Parliament in South Africa, died tragically in a motor car accident while visiting his youngest son in Israel on August 25, 1987.

Sam Kahn was one of nine children whose mother was left widowed when his father died during a 'flu epidemic shortly after the end of World War 1. Sam was seven years of age at the time. He was born in a poor-white area bordering on District 6 in Cape Town on December 15, 1911.

His interest in socialism developed while he was still at school but was confirmed through his membership of and activities in the Socialist Party which he joined while studying at Cape Town university where he took a law degree with several distinctions. He had the reputation of being the most prominent political student on the campus.

He was a prominent member of the Left Book Club which met regularly for debates and lectures in Plein Street, Cape Town, and attracted young and old alike. It was here that he met Pauline Urry, whom he later married and who was with him when he met his death.

On graduating, Sam Kahn opened offices as an attorney in partnership with Theo Snitcher. Later his practice on his own in Barrack Street became the haven to which hundreds of people persecuted under the apartheid laws flocked for legal aid. He appeared in many political cases following the introduction of the draconian security laws by the Nationalist government after 1948.

After years of activity on the anti-apartheid front, Sam Kahn achieved prominence as a public figure when he and Guardian editor Betty Radford were elected to the Cape Town City Council in September 1943 representing two predominantly coloured areas — District 6 and Woodstock. The chairman of the Communist Party at the time, veteran Bill Andrews, proudly announced that these were "the first Communists to sit on any official body in South Africa".

Also representing Ward 6 at the time was Cissy Gool, and she and Sam Kahn constituted a political duo which became famous throughout South Africa as spokespersons for the oppressed. Sam Kahn was re-elected to the Council as a Communist in September 1946.

Sam Kahn's legal training, extraordinary memory, great intellect and wit made him master of the tactics and strategies required of anybody wishing to represent the oppressed in a largely hostile environment, and he soon established himself as leader of the progressive bloc in the Council. Such was his reputation that when he stood as a Communist candidate for Parliament in 1948 he was elected with a huge majority, both his opponents losing their deposits.

Sam Kahn's historic election to Parliament as a Native Representative for the Western Cape constituency was viewed with horror and dismay by Nationalist and United Party MPs alike. A government spokesman proclaimed that "a stop better be put to this immediately, as one never knows where it can lead to"; while the United Party spokesman opined that "now that Kahn has been elected, he should resign so as to save Native Representatives to Parliament".

Sam Kahn made it clear as soon as the opportunity presented itself in the House of Assembly that he had not been elected to save the Native Representatives but to put the case for all the oppressed people of South Africa. He did not confine his activities to Parliament, but was active in the extra-parliamentary field and attracted huge audiences wherever he spoke in public up to the time he was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act.

His speeches in Parliament were models of construction and touched on all the main items affecting the oppressed people of the country. He condemned the government's attack on the trade unions, and its determination to defy the world by holding on to Namibia "by naked measures of annexation or incorporation". With facts and figures he exposed the extent to which the blacks were robbed and exploited under apartheid to the benefit of the white minority. During the debate on the Mixed Marriages Bill he debunked the regime's "pseudo-biological fantasies about race purity" and described the Minister of the Interior, Dr T.E. Donges, as "South Africa's leading political misanthropologist" trying to force on the population a Bill which "is the immoral offspring of an illicit union between racial superstition and biological ignorance".

Some of his comments on the ancestry of Nationalist MPs so outraged the House that they were ordered to be struck from the Hansard record!

After attacking the Minister of Justice for introducing so many acts of repression, he turned on the United Party opposition, describing their attitude of complicity in the anti-Communist campaign as "noble as that of a man who makes a compact with a gang of burglars to allow them passage through his house to rob his neighbours on condition they do not touch any of his precious property".

Refuting the Justice Minister's calumnies about "reservoirs and water supplies being poisoned by Communists", Kahn told a packed House during the debate on the Suppression Bill:

"You cannot imprison ideas. You cannot impale people's ideas on bayonets. You cannot crush thoughts with knobkerries. You cannot concentrate views behind barbed wire; and no amount of suppression, no amount of brutal force to hinder people in the expression of their political views and the attainment of their aspirations will ever succeed. Life will always assert itself".

He consistently and courageously defended the Communist Party and its policies. After reading to the House on June 20, 1950, the Communist Party's announcement of its dissolution, he said:

"Communism will outlive the Nationalist Party. Democracy will be triumphant when members of this government will be manuring the fields of history. Millions in South Africa will echo my final words: 'Long live Communism' ".

Sam Kahn was expelled from Parliament in 1952 on the grounds that he had been a member of the now-banned Communist Party. The African voters of Cape Western reasserted their support for the man and his policies by returning in his place, with huge majorities, first Brian Bunting and then Ray Alexander, both former members of the banned Communist Party, and finally Congress of Democrats candidate Len Lee-Warden, before African representation in Parliament was abolished altogether by the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959.

Sam Kahn narrowly escaped arrest when the State of Emergency was declared after the Sharpeville massacre of 1960. He went underground and was helped by friends to reach Swaziland. From there, several months later, he flew over South African territory to reach first Botswana and later Ghana, but not before attempts had been made to assassinate him en route. The plane which eventually carried him to the United Kingdom also had on board, amongst others, ANC President Tambo's wife Adelaide and their children.

In exile Sam Kahn became a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain and of Liberation, formerly the Movement for Colonial Freedom. He spoke at many meetings in the U.K. and attended many international conferences. He unrelentingly attacked the Israeli Government's pro-apartheid policies and championed the cause of the Palestinian people. He was a lifelong supporter of the Soviet Union, which he visited in 1954.

The sympathies of the liberation movement as a whole are extended to Pauline and his four sons who survive him.

JAMES PHILLIPS — WORKERS' LEADER AND TROUBADOUR

The death of James Phillips on October 22, 1987, is a great loss to cultural workers and trade unionists alike. First as a trade unionist and then as an ANC activist, artist and cultural worker his contribution to the struggle extended over 50 years. He will be remembered by the labour movement for the part he played in the struggle for workers' unity and the defence of living standards when factory workers, new to urban industry, impoverished and exploited, faced increased attacks on their living standards.

Born in Sophiatown in 1919 and educated at Lovedale, James Phillips involved himself in the struggle for liberation. He served as treasurer of the African People's Organisation and later joined the Communist Party. He was one of the founders, in 1941, of the Council of Non-European Trade Unions, the forerunner of SACTU and COSATU. With Gana Makabeni as President, Dan Tloome Vice President, David Gosani Secretary and James Phillips Trustee, the CNETU became a significant new voice for workers in the iron, steel, engineering and mining industries. Soon workers in other sectors affiliated when Phillips and other members of the executive brought together most of the unions that the Communist Party and progressives had organised during the thirties. By 1945 the CNETU had an affiliated membership of 158,000 workers, organised in 119 trade unions. James Phillips represented the organisation at important times of the struggle, not least during crisis and war. In 1951 he was elected CNETU president.

He was chairman of the General Strike Committee in 1946, when the African Mineworkers' Union brought out 70,000 African mine workers who succeeded in shutting down 21 mines before they were driven stope by stope back to the compounds. The CNETU called a general strike in solidarity with the miners and to protest at the police violence and killing of 12 African miners.

A rally called by the CNETU was banned, but not before James Phillips as Chairman of the General Strike Committee addressed the workers. By August 17 (forty-one years before the second great mine strike) the action ended, after five heroic days. Phillips and 87 other trade unionists were arrested, many of them tried under the Riotous Assemblies and Natives Regulations Acts, some receiving relatively long and immobilising suspended sentences. The members of the executive of the Communist Party were arrested and charged (unsuccessfully) with sedition. James Phillips, as one of the leaders of the CNETU, stood steadfast through it all.

In the years that followed, James Phillips was active in the events that led to the campaign of defiance against unjust laws and the closer unity of the Congress Movement. In 1952, as representative of the CNETU, he was present, together with Manilal Ghandi and Yusuf Cachalia, Secretary of the SAIC, at the conference of the ANC which launched the Defiance Campaign. He was arrested together with other leaders of the Defiance Campaign and sentenced to nine months imprisonment (suspended) for "statutory communism."

As Chairman of the No. 2 Branch of the Garment Workers' Union, he continued to work for workers' unity, urging workers to defend their union in the face of the Nationalist government's vicious threats against the trade union movement and its leaders. The State's assault came sooner than anticipated. In 1953, following the banning of JB Marks, President of the African Mineworkers' Union, and Solly Sachs, Secretary of the Garment Workers' Union, James Phillips, Dan Tloome and 33 others fell victim to the Suppression of Communism Act, and were ordered to resign from their trade unions and desist from union activity.

Police persecution and harassment led him to leave South Africa in 1954. In exile he was able to train his rich, bass, voice, which invariably he put to use in the workers' cause. In 1971 he represented SACTU at a conference of the CGT in France and in the succeeding years represented the ANC in all corners of the globe, bringing, in songs, the message of liberation and anti-imperialism to people the world over. He will be remembered by the many choirs he trained and the innumerable audiences he inspired with the songs of the South African revolution.

DOUGLAS WOLTON

Douglas Wolton, prominent in the affairs of the Communist Party of South Africa in the late 1920s and early 1930s, died at his home in Ross-on-Wye, Wales, on October 25, 1987, at the age of 89.

Born in England, Wolton came to South Africa in 1921 and joined the Communist Party in 1925. He was a leading exponent of the "Black Republic" slogan adopted by the Communist International at its Sixth Congress in Moscow in 1928, and subsequently endorsed at the CPSA's 1929 congress.

"The slogan of a South African Native Republic is clearly a challenging cry from the vast majority of the proletariat to sweep away the privileged minority positions occupied by the white workers", he wrote in a report to the 6th Comintern Congress. "Effective unity between black and white worker cannot be contemplated seriously until power is in the hands of the working class in this country".

Black unity was essential in the struggle against white domination, he urged. Calling for support for the national struggle of the Africans, he said that the activities of the ANC, despite shortcomings, "reveal a conscious desire of the African people to one day possess power and constitute a very strong national expression of the people towards independent action".

Elected secretary of the Communist Party at its 1930 congress, Wolton initiated a campaign to drive out of the Party the "right-wing opportunists" who, he alleged, were sabotaging the implementation of the Black Republic policy. In his history of the CPSA *Fifty Fighting Years* A. Lerumo (Michael Harmel) wrote:

"A harshly intolerant, ultra-left period ensued in the leadership, which cost the Party untold damage in membership and influence". Leading Communists like W.H. Andrews and S.P. Bunting and a number of white trade unionists were expelled. "The proceedings were arbitrary in the extreme. The members concerned were not faced with the charges or given a chance to reply".

This internal squabbling devastated the Party until the late 1930s when Moses Kotane was elected general secretary and the Party headquarters were removed from Johannesburg to Cape Town.

The Party was subjected to intense persecution and harassment after its adoption of the Black Republic resolution, and Wolton served two short prison sentences in 1932 and 1933. After his release from the second term in August 1933, Wolton left South Africa with his family and returned to England where he remained until his death last year.

* * *

Political revolutions are inevitable in the course of the socialist revolution, which should not be regarded as a single act, but as a period of turbulent political and economic upheavals, the most intense class struggle, civil war, revolutions and counter-revolutions.

V.I. Lenin, *on the Slogan for a United States of Europe,* 1915.

* * *

BOOK
REVIEWS
MARX & ENGELS The Communist Manifesto
V I Lenin
Karl Marx

PROBLEMS OF A LIBERATION MOVEMENT AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Guinea-Bissau From Liberation to Independent Statehood, by Carlos Lopes. (Zed Press, London.)

This book examines the alignment of forces in Guinea-Bissau during the liberation struggle and in the post-independence era — the leadership crisis, lack of political direction and the danger of political short cuts. In doing so, Carlos constructs his argument on the basis of Marxist philosophy, shifting from 'orthodox' to neo-Marxism. Throughout the book Carlos shows great admiration for Amilcar Cabral, though not without criticism.

He is optimistic about the future, critical of the way leadership takes decisions and sometimes finds himself in a sea of confusion when it comes to the tribal issue. However, this remains one of the most thought-provoking books for the practitioners of revolutionary transformation of African societies.

In examining the social structures in Guinea Bissau, Carlos exposes the extent to which the Portuguese divided society by creating an "indigenous elite, educated a certain number of 'natives', permitted some Africans access to University courses . . ."(page 12). In addition, argues Carlos, "they weakened the power of the chiefs and the structures on which they relied by turning them into puppets" (page 12). Although he seems committed to national unity cutting across tribal barriers, Carlos sometimes finds it difficult to disentangle himself from the tribal hang-ups of the past. On page 13, he argues that the Fula were allies of the Portuguese through their chiefs, whilst on page 14 he praises the Balanta tribe who, he says, ". . . inflicted the heaviest casualties on the Portuguese in their military campaigns of 'pacification'."

In discussing power relations in Guinea Bissau, Carlos reflects on an issue which seems to occupy the mind of many students of Marxism when analysing African societies, that, "... the Guinean social formation comprises various modes of production" (page 23). Having to choose between Rene Galissot's concept of "non-capitalist", and what he describes as the "... rigid view of social evolution offered by orthodox Marxism — 'pre-capitalist'," Carlos prefers the former, because "it does not necessarily imply the notion of ascent towards a capitalist mode of production" (page 23). Avoiding entering into an argument, he does not go on to discuss the current socio-economic order or the direction in which it is moving.

Carlos raises a concern about the weakening of ties between Guinea and Cape Verde which according to him were recently sustained by the link between the petty bourgeoisies of the two countries, contrary to the teaching of Cabral who emphasised "the historical and cultural similarities between their two peoples — "the existence of a common language." Despite these differences, Carlos still insists that "Guinea and Cape Verde formed a social and cultural entity."

Carlos blames the leadership for the failure to teach its cadres politics. For example, on page 34, he correctly asserts that "guerrilla warfare demands initiative and self-denial", but goes further to say, "this can lead ..., to an insensitivity to the true spirit of struggle, which is essentially political". He concludes by saying "it is understandable that there should begin to appear petty dictators, or militarists, with certain anti-democratic charisma," as if blaming the freedom fighters for their commitment to armed struggle.

Another weakness inherent in the system which Carlos reflects on is the fact that peasants are not involved in the decision making process, especially development programmes which affect their lives daily. While it is true that "the land cannot be developed without the party,"the peasants say that, "those fellows in Bissau do not solve our problems" (page 130). According to Carlos the peasants associate the party with the central administration in town.

Carlos criticises Cabral for stating, during the liberation struggle, that "in our party there is no racism". He calls this an illusion, because it is precisely racism which led to the coup d'etat in 1980 (page 133). Related to this is what Carlos calls the "myth (that there) was the non-existence of divisions within the national liberation movement". He holds Luiz Cabral responsible for the administrative and political crisis facing the country today, one-man leadership. The situation was not improved by the transference of power to "one man of hopes and desires ...", Nino Vieira, he argues (page 127).

In the concluding chapter, Carlos makes a quick survey of the other former Portuguese colonies, Mozambique and Angola, and tries to search for the problems he encounters in Guinea Bissau. In his endeavour to make a comparison between Angola and Guinea Bissau he quotes MPLA's programme as an example of an unfulfilled promise to the people of Angola. It is hard to believe that Carlos is unable to see that his allegations are unfounded because Angola has never been given a breathing space by the imperialist powers since independence, and still continues to suffer from the aggression perpetrated by South Africa and the Unita bandits. Carlos' comparison is therefore invalidated.

T.B. Fulani

PROVOCATIVE VARIATIONS ON THE RACE THEME

A Sport of Nature by Nadine Gordimer. (Jonathan Cape, London.)

The novel takes the reader on a journey through the life of a white South African woman Hillela. She is a Sport Of Nature, a character without inhibitions or complexes, a personality whose natural honesty and frankness easily earn her a reputation for being either insensitive and scheming or inocent and naive. She goes through many changes in her life. She changes homes, names, schools; later jobs, men, countries and roles.

The homes of the two aunts who bring Hillela up give us an opportunity to see white South Africa with its pants down to a certain extent. The rich Olga's major preoccupation is antiques, "that selection from the past only of what is beautiful, lifted cleanly from the context of its bloody revolutions".

On the other hand Pauline's house offers one the opportunity to eavesdrop on the perpetual discussion about South Africa and the role of the white liberal in the fight for change in that country. Sharp contradictions come up. Hillela's cousin, Sasha, goes to school in Swaziland, where he relates to black boys as "other boys in the same class . . . you could fight with them or confide in them, masturbate with them, they were friends or schoolboy enemies".

But back in the house the attitude towards blacks was different. Joe and Pauline would always try hard to help blacks. Alpheus, the son of the weekly washerwoman, is given accommodation in the garage and a chance to earn some money while studying. Eventually Alpheus starts a family, which ends up necessitating that he moves out of the garage. Sasha wonders how this kind of 'favour' has anything to do with accepting blacks as fellow humans, or how it changes the situation of blacks in South Africa generally.

The writer, through her characters, deals with the race issue with honesty and boldness. Sasha's letter from detention complains "There was a lot of shit to take from . . . blacks. Why should I be called whitey?" The answer to that is given by Hillela's black husband who, in explaining how armed struggle will develop to a point when soft targets have to be hit, says to her "Yes, you too. If you happened to be there. You were born in sin, my love, the sins of your white people."

Regrettably, the reader does not get to know Whaila Kgomani very well. We see snatches of him when he is around and we are told that he works close to Tambo. We do not get the opportunity to see their relationship develop, to feel what it is in Hillela that attracts him and makes him want to make her his wife, when he has left a family in South Africa. In the end, after his assassination, the reader can't help feeling that Kgomani has been used as a stepping stone. It was their relationship that made Hillela accepted in the ranks of the ANC. It was due to the fact that she was his widow that many doors would open to her afterwards. What does this say about the writer's perception of a Kgomani? Even after his death on a kitchen floor in Lusaka his right to the status of a martyr is being contested by casting doubt on whether the killers were actually after him or Tambo that night.

Gordimer does not only use Tambo's name as an 'old friend' to Hillela, but uses the names of many more African leaders to legitimise — even worse still — a US State Department agent, Leonie Adlestrop. Although she does say that Leonie is an agent, she does not credit any of her important "trophies" with the intelligence to see through her at any level. Instead we are told that even Whaila Kgomani who was generally anti-American thought that Leonie was special or different.

At no point in the novel does one feel that Hillela becomes a cadre of the movement in the true sense. She works in the offices, imbibes all the details about guerrillas being infiltrated, imagines herself escorting her rainbow family to a free South Africa, but essentially remains herself: ever energetic and adventurous. One wonders if perhaps it is a problem of the writer not being in a position to portray what it is to be a cadre of the movement. Or is the writer actually saying that you can be a freedom fighter without being tied down by the discipline of the movement and you will still emerge respectable? If that is so then the question is 'Whose needs would you be satisfying? Your own personal need to feel useful in some way or the other; or would you be serving the needs of the struggle?'

Hillela ends up married to the President of a newly-independent African state. The husband takes her to be presented to the first wife. "Where she should have been ill at ease . . . she got talking as if she were back somewhere she knew well, and tasted the wild spinach as if it were a treat." Here the writer's enthusiasm for her main character does become a bit reckless, bordering on being insulting. The day the first wife is buried, we are told, the President had no tears; instead Hillela invites him to bed.

The last chapter of the novel, about independence celebrations in a free South Africa, sounds flat, contrived and is absolutely unnecessary in the view of this reviewer.

Nadine Gordimer is an accomplished writer who gives her subjects all her intensity of feeling and perception, even though she sometimes tries to tackle subjects that she is in no way qualified to do justice to. This novel is definitely worth reading, precisely because it is provocative.

B. Kgositsile

A SEXUAL FANTASY

Mating Birds, by Lewis Nkosi. (Published by Constable, London. Price £8.95.)

Sitting in the death cell, to which he has been consigned for raping a white woman, a young African Sibiya turns over in his mind the events that have led to his downfall. He first met the girl, Veronica Slater, on a Durban beach — or rather he didn't meet her, because they were forced by the apartheid laws to occupy separate beaches. But they were close to the frontier which divided them and though they did not speak to one another could exchange glances. The chance meetings became more frequent, the glances more meaningful as they became attracted to one another. In time they were able to excite one another to the pitch of an orgasm in a "pantomime of sex" staged on the beach by remote control.

One day Sibiya follows Veronica to her bungalow. Veronica knows he is following her, but on reaching her home leaves the door open and begins to undress inside. "Naked as on the day she was born", she lies down on her bed. Overcome by lust, Sibiya enters the cottage and "seized her then, seized her roughly with a long-stoked-up violence that was a halfway house of love, murder, and rape. I even enjoyed the swift mobile look of fear that shot across her face, but there was also in the depths of her eyes a perverse excitement. She groaned, she moaned softly". But she didn't utter a word of protest. "No speech, no pleas, no exhortations. Not even a scream to warn me off, although at one stage, while I was attempting to achieve penetration, we even rolled off the bed together onto the floor, the girl grappling with my belt, aiding and abetting that final entry . . ."

They have still not said a word to one another.

Of course it is not impossible that such things can happen, but looking back on it all even Sibiya finds it improbable. The purpose of the book is to explain how, against the background of South Africa's race laws, such a relationship can develop. When he first clapped eyes on Veronica she was lying on the beach under a notice board "bearing the legendary warning: BATHING AREA — FOR WHITES ONLY!" Sibiya ruminates:

"Though now I have had sufficient time to review the events that led to the encounter, I am certain what I felt for her was not exactly sexual desire for a body I must have known I could never possess, the race laws being what they are in South Africa; no, it was something more, something vaster, sadder, more profound than simple desire. Mingled with that feeling was another emotion: anger."

In this, his first novel, Lewis Nkosi writes evocatively of African village and township life and he has some caustic comments to make on court and prison procedures, the hypocrisy of judges and jailers. But he concentrates his attention on the development of the passion between Sibiya and Veronica. Regrettably, for all his graphic prose, he does not quite bring it off. Veronica remains unreal, and Sibiya's lust for her a fantasy in which he indulges to a point bordering on soft porn. The novel is saved from banality, however, by the quality of Nkosi's writing and the acuity of his perceptions of the South African scene.

As a student Sibiya had also been a rebel. In the last chapter, contemplating his death by hanging, he reflects:

"Yes, I'm to die. I'll die a victim not of this white woman's lunatic lies and my own worthless passion for what remained always a light beyond my reach, a light beyond the horizon; all that can be forgiven. Love, passion, simplicity, even ignorance can be forgiven. They are not the things for which one is too ashamed to die. But they are not what I will die for. No, I'll die of a vaster, deeper, more cruel conspiracy by the rulers of my country who have made a certain knowledge between persons of different races not only impossible to achieve but positively dangerous even to *attempt* to acquire. They have made contact between the races a cause for profoundest alarm amongst white citizens".

Of course the Mixed Marriages Act and the Immorality Act are no longer on the statute book. No matter, the point is still valid, that ordinary human relations between black and white are rendered impossible by the apartheid laws, that blacks are justifiably angry and determined to resist. Sibiya is heartened in his last days by "political prisoners lustily singing freedom songs ... Voices individually weak and at first very tentative, but once united combine into a single powerful sound rolling and thundering, shaking the very foundations of the prison walls. Yes, those voices keep me company. I couldn't ask for a better send-off to the next world than those voices announcing the near-dawn of freedom . . ."

Z.N.

AANHOUER WEN

Escape from Pretoria, by Tim Jenkin, (Kliptown Books, London. Price £5.)

When political prisoners Tim Jenkin, Steve Lee and Alex Moumbaris escaped from the top security wing of Pretoria Prison in December 1979 and got clean away the whole world marvelled. How had they managed it? How did they get out of their cells and penetrate through 14 locked doors to freedom? How had they escaped the ensuing manhunt? The incredulous apartheid authorities believed it could only have been an inside job and tried to pin the blame on a warder. But the truth was far more complicated.

One by one keys were manufactured, together with apparatus for their use, so that door by door the three prisoners were able to penetrate the jail defences. Place yourself, gentle reader, in the position of the prisoner. How do you, from inside your cell, open your solid door from the outside? How do you get the materials to make a key and carry out all the work without detection? How do you know what sort of key to cut when most of the locks are different?

Tim Jenkin must be one of the world's great lock masters, for it was largely due to his minute observations and inexhaustible patience, trial-and-error cutting and filing that the whole escape became possible. And there was a certain element of luck — or was it the reward of daring? — that blinded his jailers to the fantastic enterprise that was being conducted under their very noses. There were many moments when, had they been gifted with imagination, the warders might have tumbled to what was happening and brought everything to an abrupt halt. But patience and perseverance, together with meticulous planning, were rewarded and the 18 months of effort the three had put into their plot were crowned with total success.

Tim Jenkin's story is not just about cutting keys. He viewed imprisonment as a facet of political struggle and says he was simply not prepared to accept the 12 year sentence imposed on him by the court for promoting the aims of the ANC, SACP and Umkhonto we Sizwe.

"We had a duty to escape, a duty to our organisation — the ANC — and to the oppressed in whose name we had gone to prison . . . We had to free ourselves so that we could throw ourselves back into the struggle, so that we could achieve a victory over the apartheid regime".

He writes that he matriculated at the age of 17, leaving school "totally ignorant of the world in which I lived. Not a single political thought ever arose in my head".

The first part of his book is an account of his transformation from thoughtless reactionary to committed revolutionary. He and Stephen Lee met as students at UCT, and ended up members of an underground cell in Cape Town, distributing the illegal leaflets of the ANC and SACP. They met Moumbaris in jail.

After the escape from jail they were free but not yet safe. The last section of the book covers their adventures in the Transvaal before they reached the comparative safety of Swaziland, later moving on to Mozambique, Tanzania and, ultimately, Europe.

Escape from Pretoria is described in the publisher's blurb as "a true story which reads like a thriller". But life is sometimes stranger than fiction. Tim Jenkin and his comrades must often pinch themselves to make sure it really happened.

M.P.

A TRADE UNION SMASHED BY ANTI-COMMUNISM

Against the Tide: a history of the Canadian Seamen's Union, by Jim Green, published by Progressive Books, 1987.

The Canadian Seamen's Union (CSU) was a progressive union formed in September 1936, which consistently worked in the interests of its rank-and-file members until its demise in 1951. Working conditions for seamen in Canada, and in the United States, were appalling in the 1930s. The Canada Shipping

Act of 1934 (which was revised only in 1970) kept the ships' crews subject to the dictates of the captain (who acted on behalf of the shipowners). Any group action contrary to the wishes of the captain was considered mutiny. Seamen were on duty 16 hours a day; those working on the lakes and rivers had jobs only in the summer, and had to seek other work in the winter, with no job security for them the following summer. Between 1929 and 1935, wages (which were never good) dropped by 50%. Clearly a union was needed to address these working conditions.

In the early days of the union, the shipowners called the shots. During one strike and lockout, for instance, the owners fired all their employees, and then said that they had no employees to bargain with about the issues that had led to the strike! (p.69). Such action was entirely within the law at the time.

The Canadian navy increased in size during the war years, and the union recruited further members. It was extremely difficult to organise workers who were out at sea for many months of the year. However, with the aid of ships' committees, and with the help of the union newspaper *Searchlight*, it was possible to organise, educate and keep up the morale of its membrs. The union successfully bargained for six hours on duty and six hours off, and eventually the seamen won an eight hour day. But it was an uphill struggle all the way, with the Canadian government changing legislation only very slowly and reluctantly.

After the war, the union experienced the effects of anti-communism. Some of the members of the union executive were communists, and the shipowners, the Government, and even other unions were critical of the CSU for this. So hostile did the climate become on this issue of communism, that the shipowners were able to violate union agreements, and even contravene the Canadian Labour Code, with impunity (such as when they reached agreements with uncertified unions).

The Seamen's International Union (SIU), which became the main rival to the CSU, was affiliated to the American Federation of Labour (AFL). This affiliation assisted it in its battle against the CSU, and illustrated the way in which the US labour organisation actually worked against the interests of its members, and for the interests of the capitalist class. The SIU made much of the communist "domination" of the CSU, even implying that it was under the control of a foreign power (the Soviet Union, of course).

When the Canadian government refused to prosecute the shipowners for breaking the law, the seamen went on strike in an attempt to protect all the rights the CSU had won over the years. Several Canadian ships in South African ports became part of the strike, and the Canadian seamen asked that

South African longshoremen not unload the ships. The Cape Town Trades and Labour Council supported the strike, as did the Fishermen's Union, the Sweet Workers' Union, and the bus drivers' union. The Canadians were impressed with the role women played in the South African trade union movement, compared to their own situation. They were also shocked at the effects of apartheid on the work of the unions in South Africa.

When an SIU-manned ship arrived in Cape Town, a demonstration was organised against it. All the protesters were arrested under the Riotous Assemblies Act, and CSU members ended up in Roeland Street jail.

Unfortunately, the courage shown by the CSU could not defeat the massive onslaught by the shipowners, the Government, the right-wing SIU, and anti-communism. Eventually, even the Canadian Trades and Labour Council abandoned the union, claiming that "communist domination" implied ulterior motives that were incompatible with its status as a union, and the union was de-certified as the seamen's bargaining agent (p 289). In 1951, the union ceased to exist and the SIU took over as the certified bargaining agent. This union was subsequently shown to be dictatorial, to operate goon squads on behalf of the shipowners, and to expel its members if they ever held any membership meetings!

The tactics used to defeat the CSU are all too familiar. The same tactics have been used all over the world to try to defeat progressive trade unions. Anti-Communism has, unfortunately, been very successful at times.

LETTERS TO THE
EDITOR

CAN BELIEVERS BE TRUE COMMUNISTS?

From Mayibuye, Lusaka

Dear Editor,

This letter seeks to clarify some of the issues surrounding the debate as to whether believers can be communists. This is a thorny question which requires clarification at different levels. Firstly, at a philosophical level, a communist would be one who adheres to the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism. Marxism-Leninism comprises three component parts namely the philosophy of dialectical materialism, political economy and scientific communism. It is on the principles of dialectical materialism that Marxist-Leninists seek to cognise and transform the world. These principles are uncompromisingly materialist and any attempt to explain phenomena by invoking idealist or spiritual categories is resolutely opposed. The rise and development of science has indeed shown us that any attempt to predicate the existence of spirit as a non-corporeal, immaterial entity is ontologically and epistemologically impossible. In this sense any religion whose philosophical foundations are reared on the notion of Spirit is antithetical to a dialectical materialist philosophy which maintains that the world is material (and that even notions of "mind" are merely qualitatively advanced forms of matter.)

This brings us to the second point, namely the political relationship between communists and believers. For a communist the attainment of a just society is premised on a cognition of the laws of historical development which are in turn harnessed to transform reality. These laws are the laws of matter in its social manifestations. Thus both the cognition and transformation of the world is uncompromisingly materialist in content. However, this does not exclude believers from both joining and working with a communist party. The broader ethical and humanitarian goals of Christians correspond in many respects to the goals espoused by communists. It was Lenin who believed that Christians should be encouraged to join the communist party not only because of their common social goals but also because fellow communists could contribute to the theoretical development of their Christian comrades. Communists will work with those people who promote and actively campaign for all democratic rights and who oppose all forms of exploitation. This consideration is not based on tactical considerations alone. It is born out of the communists' sincere desire to involve all strata and classes of society in the reconstruction of a just, democratic and non-exploitative society. Yet of equal importance is the educational responsibility of communists within the party towards their Christian comrades — and all other believers. At all times communists should seek to illustrate the epistemological roots of religion, analyse the role which religion fulfils in a society and explain how a Marxist-Leninist perspective of the world overcomes erroneous interpretations of reality. To ask communists to renege on this strategy is to undermine both the very foundations of Marxist-Leninist philosophy and the nature of a communist party itself.

COMMUNISTS AND CHRISTIANS ARE ALLIES IN THE STRUGGLE

From Quincy, Somewhere in Africa

Dear Editor,

The African Communist needs to be congratulated for the publication (third quarter 1987) of the two articles on "Communists and Christians in South Africa". For me, a third generation communist and a 'student' of Marxism-Leninism, it is a breath of fresh air to read such articles, written by practising Christians, demonstrating that it is possible for Christians and Communists to struggle together against the exploitation of man by man and for the liberation of mankind. I would go as far as to suggest that there is no contradiction, certainly not of an antagonistic nature, in a Christian joining a Communist Party or, for that matter, of a Communist being a Christian. In a sense they both have the same objective: broadly speaking that of a society where the brotherhood of mankind can be practically carried out, which is not possible in a society based on the exploitation of man by man.

However, it is important to understand that their method of reaching their objective is somewhat different. The Christian seeks to change man's ideas (referred to as spreading 'the gospel' or 'the word of the Lord') and hence, through the conversion of individuals, a new social order will come about. By winning the individual to the brotherhood of mankind he hopes the exploitation of man by man will be overcome. The Communist method is to change society (referred to as engaging in class struggle to bring about a revolution) and hence laying the basis for the development of mankind. He maintains that by overcoming the exploitation of man by man the individual can be won for the brotherhood of mankind.

The reason for the different approach is their different philosophical outlook. The Christian has an idealist philosophy whilst the Communist has a materialist philosophy. History has testified which is the successful method but that doesn't mean the other has nothing to contribute.

The article by Father Michael Lapsley is excellent in that it deals with that which creates unity. In the second paragraph on page 64 he states "This paper will address some of the issues involved in the participation in a common struggle by Christians and Communists *but will not attempt to deal with the underlying theoretical and philosophical issues"* (my emphasis). A bit further on, the first paragraph, page 65, he says "I deliberately chose the word 'Communist' in the title."

To be a Communist requires that you are prepared to adhere to and fight for the policy of the Communist Party, even if you find yourself at variance with some aspects of that policy. The structure exists within the Communist Party to resolve differences. When discussion is completed the majority position must prevail. This is as much a demand upon a Christian member as it is upon a non-Christian member. Communist Parties do not have policies banning religions or religious worship under Socialism, but the exact opposite. Their policy is to grant the right to the individual to practise his or her own religion, even though the majority of members have no religious affiliations. (Needless to say, any religion which seeks, wittingly or unwittingly, to bring back the exploitation of man by man could not be allowed to develop and would be combatted and, if necessary, banned).

To be a Christian, as I understnd it from what I was taught and have read about the role of Jesus (sometimes refered to as the first 'socialist' on this planet), requires that you believe in the existence of God or of some supernatural force and, especially for the progressive Christian, that you live your life based on the brotherhood of mankind and the teaching of that faith, encouraging others to do likewise in the process. There is nothing in this preventing a member of the Communist Party from complying if he or she so wishes to do.

So where does the problem arise with an individual being both a Christian and a Communist? It lies in their philosophical outlook.

To be the best communist, and thus participate in Communist Party committees and its leadership, requires a thorough understanding of Marxism-Leninism and developing the ability to apply it creatively. This is a materialist philosophy and comes into conflict with the idealist philosophy of the Christian. However, this is a matter for the individual to resolve, if necessary through discussions with fellow Christians and Communists, as to whether he or she can continue his or her joint allegiance to Christianity and Communism. It is certainly not a reason for opting out or ceasing to support the liberation movement or even going as far as to oppose the liberation movement.

The article by Cedric Mayson deals with these philosophical questions and, hence, provokes a response. Let me say at this stage that this response is aimed at seeking clarification of these philosophical outlooks and should not be interpreted to suggest or used to create disunity amongst Christians and Communists in the common struggle for the liberation of mankind from the exploitation of man by man. It is clear to me that both articles are written to develop the unity of Christians and Communists in the common struggle and this response is written with the same aim in mind, that is the development of the unity of Communists and Christians in the common struggle.

Cedric Mayson, in dealing with these philosophical questions, makes it difficult to understand which philosophical stance he actually takes. On page 58 before his quotation from Jesus, Luke 4.18 he states: "These deeply 'spiritual' qualities are at heart deeply 'materialist'," preparing the ground for: "The greatest of spiritual assertions is thoroughly materialist". Is this an attempt to show that Christians and Communists have similar philosophies as they have similar objectives with regard to the brotherhood of mankind? Or is this an attempt to use materialist philosophy to justify an idealist philosophy due to the misrepresentation of Christianity by the capitalist class in the defence of capital? I think the latter is the case as he spends most of his time demonstrating how Christianity is opposed to capitalism.

Ignoring the fundamental differences between materialism and idealism leads to confusion. A spiritual assertion is either materialist or idealist in conception. Its greatness cannot alter the fact that it has or has not material existence. Father Michael Lapsley hits the nail on the head in his fifth paragraph on page 70 when he poses the question: "Instead of asking whether it is possible for a Christian to be a communist, isn't it time that we begin to ask *whether is it is possible for a Christian to be a capitalist*" (my emphasis). The brotherhood of man is the opposite and an antagonistic contradiction of the exploitation of man by man; that is, one cannot be an expression of the other. It is from this position that the unity of Communists and Christians can be developed, that is, from the fact that a Christian cannot be a capitalist, and not from the dilemma a Christian will face being a Communist.

The two main philosophies on which all other philosophies are based are the idealist philosophy and the materialist philosophy. With the former the idea is primary and exists independent of the material world; the material world is secondary and dependent on the idea. This is the philosophical basis on which Christianity is promoted. For a materialist the material world is primary and exists independently of the idea; the idea is secondary and dependent on the material world. This is the philosophical basis on which Communism is promoted. They are, obviously, opposing philosophies and one cannot be used to defend the other as only confusion can result.

If we look at Cedric Mayson's interpretation of John Wren-Lewis on page 57: "The *faith* of Christians is not focussed on a Being out there somewhere, but on what Tillich calls 'the *infinite* and *inexhaustible depth* and ground of all being'" (my emphasis). Here we clearly have an idealist concept based on faith in the infinite and inexhaustible. However, he further interprets this to become "the beingness, the basis of life, which we experience on earth here and now". This beingness now becomes something finite that I know, but the infinite and inexhaustible I do not know. The idealist basis of Christianity is better demonstrated on page 54 just before the quotation from Pixley. Here Mayson states: "Progressive Christians *believe* that Jesus is important for the revolution, not by trying to make a god out of him (which he did not do himself) but by putting his *liberating message of the kingdom of God on Earth* into action" (my emphasis). At the bottom of page 54, concerning 'A Theological Rationale and Call to Prayer for the end of the Unjust Rule', Mayson states "that whilst previously they *called for prayer* for the government to change its policies, they now *call people to pray* for a change of government" (my emphasis). And on page 55: "The Kairos Document advocates *Prophetic Theology* which makes an adequate social analysis, shows that the conquest of oppression and dethroning of tyrants is the strong Christian tradition, *assures hope,* and *calls people to side with God* in the struggles of the oppressed" (my emphasis).

The quotations Mayson chooses from Marx on page 56 are crystal clear in demonstrating Marx's materialist philosophical basis: "Religion does not create man, but man creates religion" and hence "The demand to give up illusions about their condition is a demand to give up the condition that requires illusion." It is true that at the time of Marx Christianity was largely used to defend reaction and that progressive Christians today want to change this and relate to the role of Jesus and what he was trying to achieve. These quotations are not concerned with the nature of religion, even if it was reactionary, but with its philosophical outlook and are thus as true today as they were when written.

One of the questions I am invariably asked by a Christian is: can I prove that God does not exist (whatever form this God manifests itself in)? Strange that I am never asked to prove God exists. (I must admit I would have to say I couldn't if I was asked). My response to the Christian is that it is not necessary, as the Christian does it for me. The very religion the Christian follows depends not on the existence of God but on the belief in the existence of God. Without that faith there can be no religion. As this God does not exist the individual Christian requires belief in order to make this God exist.

Marx sums up the fundamental difference between idealism and materialism in the quotation: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness" (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol.1, Moscow 1976 pp. 503-04 'Preface to a contribution to the Critique of Political Economy'.)

Which brings me to why this present 'revolution' is taking place within the Christian movement. It is most noticeable that this struggle, this debate within the Christian movement, is initiated to a large extent from the experiences in the Latin and Central American countries and South Africa, that is, those countries still experiencing some form of colonialism and neo-colonialism. To these countries the great disparity between the rich and the poor and social deprivation for the mass of people are the order of the day.

These concrete conditions force Christians, especially those involved in the day to day activities of ordinary people, to think about their own role. They themselves begin to realise that it is not enough to simply preach the brotherhood of man (as was demonstrated in the film "Mission") as they are tainted with the association of Christianity with capitalism in the advanced capitalist countries and their previous role in the under-developed countries. However the church leadership in the advanced capitalist countries is of no help as their interests are tied up with the capitalist class. The church is one of the biggest landowners. I am often reminded of the hymn "All Things Bright and Beautiful" where an original verse:

"The rich man at his castle
The poor man at his gate.
Lord God made them high and lowly
To serve at his estate"

is conveniently omitted when the hymn is sung in churches today. No doubt a more sophisticated method is required to teach the working class and peasants their 'proper' place. So progressive Christians are forced to rethink the Christianity they were brought up with and find their salvation in re-interpreting their beliefs to follow the original teachings of Jesus. Thus they begin to identify themselves with the liberation movements in their struggle against capital. This is a very positive development and an important contribution to the liberation struggle; but in that it attacks the capitalist system that has used it for such a long time and not that this progressive Christianity is a road along which the liberation movement should travel.

We see this in Mayson's first paragraph on page 58: "Failure to recognise the transcendental is an act of unscientific stupidity and failure to engage in the transendental for the cause of liberation would be an act of criminal folly." (As to unscientific stupidity I know of no stupidity which is scientific. There are things that happen which we cannot explain. This is because we do not have the knowledge to determine the essence in the appearance. I think it was Marx who said "All knowledge is knowable, but knowledge itself is infinite". The stupidity arises when we act upon an idealist explanation for that happening). If this is a call for the Christian to be involved in the cause of liberation, well and good, but if it is a call for the liberation movement to find its solution in the transcendental then that would be criminal folly. The success of the liberation movement lies in defeating the oppressor and not being diverted to befriending progressive Christians in resolving their dilemma. At the same time the progressive Christians will resolve their dilemma through their involvement in supporting the liberation movement and not by calling on the liberation movement to support them.

Finally on page 62 concerning the comradeship of Jesus and Karl Marx Mayson states "Both emphasised action. Jesus said those who did God's will would be fit for the kingdom (not just those who called him 'Lord Lord') and Marx that 'Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways — the point, however, is to *change* it.' They were advocating involvement in the human struggle as a methodology of understanding it." Doing does not equate with change. The progressive Christian believes that doing God's will in the liberation movement (the involvement in human struggle) is the new social order. The Communist believes that by participating in class struggle (involvement in human struggle) the social system can be changed and the new social order built. After 2,000 years of Jesus no new social order has been brought about by Christians to practise the brotherhood of mankind. After 150 years of Karl Marx new social orders have been brought about in over one third of the world through the creative application of Marxism-Leninism to develop the brotherhood of mankind.

Progressive Christians, fighting to achieve their 'Promised Land', can play an important role in assisting the liberation movement to its victory where they will be able to put their beliefs to the test. For us Communists, fighting to lead the working class to carry out its historic mission, the abolition of the exploitation of man by man, it is important that we play our role in the liberation struggle thereby creating the conditions to fight for and develop socialism as a stage towards communism. It will only be under communism that the differences between Christians and Communists will be resolved. Then the abundance of the necessities of life will meet the material and spiritual needs of the people. The philosophies of Communists and Christians arise out of the material world and can only be resolved in the material world, not in the ideological world.

RELIGION vs MARXISM

From S. Ramodise, Lesotho

Dear Editor,

There have been quite a few articles in *The African Communist* which discuss the relationship of Marxism and religion. I feel it is important to point out that historically and philosophically the two are completely independent entities — they are parallel, if not diverging. This is supported by their origin.

"Heroes are not born but are produced by the struggle..." Marx, Engels, Lenin, Solomon Mahlangu were not born heroes, but Jesus, Allah were born heroes.

Marxism is the product of long and serious struggle of the working class against exploitation. Marxism is revolutionary in character, whilst religion is dogmatic. In religion ideas come before matter whilst in Marxism ideas are borne by matter. Throughout all the history of the Christian religion the people have always fulfilled the will of the divine, the almighty. They always fulfil what has been planned or thought out for them by their God — be it Allah or "X".

Marxists take it upon themselves to directly influence the course of history:

> "....We shall not lose heart whatever turn history takes, but we shall not let history take a turn without our participation, without the participation of the advanced class...." Lenin.

For these reasons and many more it is not scientific to compare Marxism with religion.

Revolutions are not carried out by Marxists alone but by a large section of the population, religious people as well as Marxists playing a leading role. Therefore the role of religious people in the liberation struggle is undoubtedly crucial, even vital, but this is not reason enough to compare religion with Marxism.

Marxists have a responsibility to counter and destroy all ideas which sow antagonism between Marxism and religion because this is the work of reactionaries and counter-revolutionaries.

Capitalists profess to love and value peace but since peace exposes them as exploiters they destroy peace. They have realised that religion and Marxism, though diverse, can exist in peace and this would mean an end to all injustice. In other words, due to the nature of capitalism there can never be peace whilst there is exploitation.

A short message to the religious people: if you love peace and strive for justice, you can work hand in hand with Marxists. They are reliable people.

In Nicaragua more than 90 per cent of the population is religious yet in this country there is justice. True, there is not peace, but who is disturbing the peace in Nicaragua? Who is organising and financing bandits to work against the people's programme of peace and progress in Nicaragua? The capitalist government of the United States of America is responsible. They have allocated hundreds of millions of dollars to destabilise and overthrow the people's government of Nicaragua and they even support apartheid in South Africa!

WE MUST INVADE THE WHITE LAAGER

From BSA, Berlin, German Democratic Republic

Dear Editor,

The apartheid-staged elections amidst much ballyhoo in the western media have come and gone. But the problems remain, growing ever more cancerous, bringing with them greater intensity in South African state terrorism, in the ruthless exploitation and grinding poverty of our people. At the same time, as the African National Congress has stated, the armed struggle will be stepped up as our continuing legitimate struggle for national and social liberation rises to ever greater heights in both scope and quality while the colonial-racist state plunges recklessly from one crisis to another.

With this in mind we should take a critical look at the approach of the liberation and progressive forces in our country to the apartheid election game.

In its editorial notes *The African Communist* (No. 2, 1987, p.24) states "Botha's 'whites only' election is an irrelevance to us" and goes on to say that it offers us nothing. The notes comment that the people must protest "against Botha's 'whites only' election by every means possible." Without appearing to be wise after the event it is necessary that we take a look at our shortcomings critically to correct them and to enrich the theory and pratice of our struggle.

We did not do enough to bring the message and standpoint of our liberation forces directly into the 'white laager'. Within the white camp itself and in the western media abroad the wishy-washy 'save the pieces' ideas of the Suzmans, Worralls and dissident Stellenbosch professors dominated. I believe that we should have been setting the pace.

In bringing protests directly into the 'white laager' from the outset the facts would have been hammered hard into the thick walls of ignorance, prejudice and greed which isolate the thinking of the mainstream of the 'white electorate' from the realities of life in our country. It should have been driven home that apartheid cannot solve South Africa's problems and must be dismantled in a hurry if they wish to avoid ruin and disaster; that there can be no solution to the country's problems without the full participation of the African National Congress. Questions should have been put to candidates as to their attitude on conscription; the continuing illegal occupation of Namibia; the continuing aggressions against, and destabilisation of, neighbouring states.

The voting itself and the election results may be an irrelevance to us. What is of relevance is an answer to the question — "to what extent has at least some of the thinking in the 'white laager' come closer to the standpoint of our liberation forces headed by the African National Congress?" In viewing this question we must take steps to correct our shortcomings. Every opportunity must be seized to penetrate thinking in the 'white laager'. The invigorating and liberatory ideas of our country's progressive forces in one way or another should always be present in the 'white laager'. This will surely give sections of the whites something to chew on. At first the process of digestion may be difficult but once the taste is acquired the number of those in the white camp who hunger and thirst for the truth will grow.

O.R. TAMBO AT SEVENTY

From Mthetheleli, Lusaka

Dear Editor,

Few are those who reach the age of seventy. Among the few, still strong and energetic, is our President, comrade Oliver Reginald Tambo. You will see him walking as if in marching drill — that to us is the proof that he is still prepared to devote all his energy to the cause of our revolution. His mind is as sharp as the spear that is now making Botha and his ilk daily groan and bellow.

He was born on October 27, 1917, in the Transkei. Quick to our minds is the though that 1917 was also the year of the Great October Socialist Revolution (GOSR). As he is seventy the GOSR is also seventy. Two important anniversaries — not seventy years old and senile, but seventy years young and mellow.

From his school days he was active in student politics. He played a prominent role at Fort Hare and later as a teacher and lawyer. He is a sound musician. In the forties he was in the leadership of the Youth League — the revolutionisers and galvanisers of the ANC, a Youth League that made the ANC move away from mere protest and deputations to active challenge of the status quo, the product of which is the Programme of Action of 1949. He belongs to those who have earned the garb of "Class of 44". He is the product of history and in turn he is a maker of history.

Comrade Tambo developed from ANC suspicions of the Party to a staunch defender of the policies and aims of the SACP. When we were to celebrate his birthday in one of our camps in 1977, the year of the 60th anniversary of the GOSR, he instructed the camp rather to mark the birthday of the GOSR on November 7. On us, the young and new in the ANC and MK, this made an indelible impression, arousing interest in the land of Peace — the USSR.

In 1960 he was forced to leave the country to lead the ANC in the trying and difficult times of exile and illegality. He managed to mould the ANC into what it is today — the ANC feared by both South African and international imperialism.

Whether it is Denton or Schulz who shamefully tells nauseating lies about the ANC being manipulated by the South African Communist Party, he retorts in a fitting manner that the bond between the ANC and the SACP is unbreakable. When told by Botha and his ilk to break ties with the SACP, he responds that the ANC and the SACP are the two pillars of the South African Revolution. The relationship between our Party and the ANC is a product of history, a product of hard times and tribulations.

When big business in South Africa (Gavin Relly et al) raise suspicions and fears about the Party, he correspondingly tells them that the ANC is what it is today because of the struggle of the Party, that the Party is what it is today because of the struggle of the ANC. These two, the ANC and the SACP, influence each other. They bring a breath of hope and happiness to our people. They are the silver lining in darkness to our people who are under perpetual harassment by Botha-Malan forces and their surrogates, the vigilantes.

Therefore talk of the ANC dissociating itself from the Party is in fact wanting to emasculate the revolution itself. It is telling us to tie our hands and kneel to pray to our Lord to deliver us to freedom. Our experience — we who are on the receiving end of racist brutality and oppression — shows us that it is only through struggle that we can defeat the regime. We have the ability to lead our people to victory. Their advance to people's power cannot be stopped.

While Botha intensifies his anti-communist hysteria, the flag of our Party is unfurled at the funerals of activists, in every demonstration. The ideas of socialism are getting a grip on our country and are spreading.

Our President, comrade OR, has contributed to this intensification of struggle. From his calls during the Wankie campaigns, "To Battle Comrades", to "Make South Africa Ungovernable, Make Apartheid Unworkable" emerged a detachment of death-defying warriors. The people are no longer prepared to be ruled in the same old way, the regime is no longer able to rule in the same old way. The democratic forces are wearing down the government of doom and misery.

The South African government tried to spread lies and confusion about the election of comrade Joe Slovo as the Party's general secretary and his relinquishing of the post of MK Chief of Staff. The regime said the ANC was succumbing to the pressures of America and big business, and that it must loosen its ties with the Party. President Tambo told one gathering held in a friendly country in Africa that the election of comrade JS (as he is affectionately called in our ranks) as the Party's general secretary would make him concentrate more on building the Party and rooting it among the people. This would sooner or later make the regime regret and wail why he did not remain the Chief of Staff of MK.

On his 70th birthday we say: "Happy birthday, comrade President!! We wish you many many more seventy years." As we are galloping towards seizure of power which is in sight, we say — "Lead us Tambo".

As we say happy birthday to our President, we turn our heads southwards, click the heels of our boots and salute our leaders in Robben Island and Pollsmoor.

Long live our President Oliver Tambo!!

ON PERESTROIKA

From Eye-witness, Luanda

Dear Editor,
Your editorial in *The African Communist* No 110, on the revolutionary transformation *perestroika* underway in the Soviet Union which penetrates all fields of social thought and practice and affects all socialist institutions — your editorial, just like the process itself, is timely and bold.

It is reflective of a deep study and clear grasp of the situation much to the benefit of the democratic formations in our country. More so, it is vital to wipe off misconceptions, misunderstandings and doubts, and all by-products of old thinking, and in their place properly orient the entire democratic movement. The scale and immensity of the changes ushered in by *perestroika* cannot but effect the revolutionary process in all corners of the globe.

The scale and significance of the restructuring process are attributable to three integrated aspects: the revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism, the seventy years of socialism and the leading instrument of revolutionary change, the Communist Party.

The historic visit of the ANC President, comrade O.R. Tambo, to Moscow at the end of 1986 is reflective of the stage set for the stubborn and triumphant pursuit of our liberation goal, internationally, in spite of all the 'constructive engagements' with racism. A large and important part of this development is attributable to the external politics of *perestroika*, the art and science of new political thinking, which created hope for peace and disarmament, and showed the possibility of its realisation. This new political thinking represents the concentrated diplomatic offensive of the forces of peace and democracy. As more and more people in the West are convinced of the sincerity of Gorbachov's initiatives (and as more will progress to realise that socialism means peace), a new and broadened surge for peace, for social progress and for international solidarity is set in motion.

On the other hand the politics of new thinking have led to the demise of Reaganism, and have exposed and thrown into serious political confusion the war mongers and arms corporations of NATO. Botha's friends are in trouble. The ideology of anti-communism, the main instrument of the racists, the fascists and their allies against the democratic movement, is passing through a crisis. Never should we lose the momentum for the socialist education of our oppressed working people.

The period of *perestroika* once again vindicates the truth that Marxism is an integral and scientific doctrine, a precision instrument in the hands and in the interest of the working masses, that has stood the test of time, where all other ideologies of the ruling classes have faded into oblivion. The Soviet communists, in providing the scientific programme for the perfection of the socialist society and the struggle for peace and progress, have registered fresh victories for Marxism-Leninism.

In the contemporary world, at the close of the century — a world marred by contradictions, national, regional and global, a world in which the danger of human extinction by a nuclear holocaust looms larger and at the period when in our country the struggle for life without racism and exploitation of man by man has grown acute and complex — the need for our working people to resolutely turn to Marxism-Leninism as the scientific guide to action is greater than ever before.

Only a socialist society can undertake such an immense revolutionary project as *perestroika*, cleanse itself of all features alien to it, further mobilise and harness all its potential without generating social evils like financial cuts, unemployment, impoverishment of the masses, curtailment of democratic rights for the majority and a turn to reaction all along the line. Gorbachov's campaign for reforms is accompanied by democratisation of social life. This is in stark contrast to Botha's reforms in which detentions, massacres, vigilantes are a vital component. The reason lies in the nature of socialism, a system where wealth is the property of all members of society and where everything is done for the well-being of man. 70 years of socialism has revealed all its potential which is being harnessed today.

We who are still searching for forms of transition to such a society, a society free from racism and exploitation, have the benefit of the accumulated experiences of our socialist allies.

The most important element in the struggle for democracy, socialism and peace is the steadfastness and all-embracing activities of a revolutionary Party armed with the science of Marxism-Leninism. There is no 'middle course'. To deviate from these laws is to open the way for our class enemies. The CPSU, in the period of *perestroika*, as in all other periods, again serves as a model of such a revolutionary Party.

In South Africa the objective need for a Marxist-Leninist Party was answered sixty-six years ago. It cannot be otherwise today.

The politics of *perestroika* have boosted the image of socialism and raised high the hopes that socialism is the only beacon of the future, a system which can provide man with solutions to social and natural problems.

Revolutionary Greetings.

§§

The cause of Labour demands the abolition of the Pass, the Compound, and the Indenture; and as the native workers gain in industrial solidarity, demands for them complete political equality with their white fellow workers. Only thus can the whole of the working class, white and black, march unitedly forward to their common emancipation from wage slavery.

The International, December 7, 1917

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